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# "GO FORTH AND FIND"

BY

THOMAS H. BRAINERD

[Jarboe, Mrs. John R.]

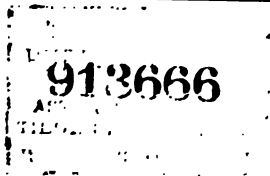
"The tale of one unto whose soul was borne  
An angel's whisper soft as summer wind,  
There is a heart which heaven has made  
for thee,  
Go forth and find."

NEW YORK

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## “GO FORTH AND FIND.”

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### I.

**T**HE sky was without a cloud, but in the west, where the horizon meets the sea, the evening vapors were gathering. They were making themselves gay for their sunset festival and already the sun seemed to be suspended in a golden mist over a sea of gold. The stretch of sandy headlands along the coast caught the color and threw it down into the smooth water where it lay in long wavy reflections. Inland the smooth rounded foothills seemed to nestle closer to the mountains in expectation of the coming night.

On the end of a short wharf which ran out over the rocks from the shel-

ter of the cliffs, a woman stood shading her eyes with her hand, and looking intently out to sea. Further back on the wharf a colored man was making tackle ready for the coming of a boat. The woman held in her hand a letter which she had just received. It was from her husband.

"We sail with the outgoing tide to-morrow morning, sweetheart," it said, "and will be with you almost as soon as this."

She had hurried down to the shore, calling, as she went, to Dan to follow her. As yet there was no sign of any sail on the wide sea. The tide was full, the surf broke in white foam over the rocks, and the air was warm and delicious. She went down from the wharf and sat on the sand to wait. Jack, her husband, had been gone a week. Now he was coming home, and with him was coming his dearest friend, Ned Harlow. She had never seen the man though she felt she knew him. His name had been a household word with them. Jack and he had been boys together, had been college chums and were like

one summer and had gone to  
Albert Cataract in winter.  
they had parted for a little while  
we all part with our dear ones; Jack  
go around through India and Japan  
across the Pacific, and so back  
to Boston; Ned to visit some  
times in England, then to while  
the rest of the time in Paris so as  
to reach home until it was time  
Jack to arrive. It is useless to  
against fate. When the big *Columbia*  
*Tokio* steamed out of the port  
Yokohama one bright morning in  
following June two people, Ben  
Morris and Jack Winthrop, stood  
near to each other that the cape  
her traveling coat touched his sleeve  
and, as he has often told her since.



were made they turned toward each other, their eyes met, and—Bessie always said that she must have known Jack in some other world because she knew him quite well at once. It is enough to say that long before they came to the golden portal of her San Francisco home they were all the world to each other; Boston was obliterated from Jack's mind and Ned, though not forgotten, because he formed the theme of endless stories as they walked the deck recounting to each other all the events of their past lives uselessly spent away from each other, still had slipped into the background and there was no thought of keeping tryst with him. As soon as they arrived in San Francisco Jack sent a cablegram to Ned to the effect that he would stay in California, and very soon wrote him a long letter full of his new life.

Bessie remembered it all very well now as she lay on the warm sand, just out of reach of the waves; how a long time had elapsed before any reply had come to Jack's letter, and how pained and mortified he had

looked when he received a scrappy little note only telling that Ned had spent the summer in the north of Scotland and was now in Paris. Jack was so hurt that Ned did not mention his engagement, nor send any word of congratulation, that he did not write again for some time, and Bessie knew he had felt that the change in Ned was due to an unworthy jealousy of her. Later they heard that he had gone to Nice, then that he had entered a conservatory of music, was studying the violin and musical composition, and then that he was going on the stage as a *tenore robusto*. Jack always said that he would rather hear Ned's voice than any other music in the world. Again they heard that his life was sadly changed; that moody and listless he wandered about the world trying a little of one thing and another, but accomplishing nothing, seeming to have no ambition or aim in life. This made Jack very unhappy and he said to Bessie:

"I have been a brute. Here I have been feeling hard toward Ned,

thinking that he was changed to me, and now I see that some great misfortune must have overtaken him. What a wretched self-conceited ass I am. He has probably needed all that I could give him, all that our old friendship could be to him, while I have held aloof. This Ned that we have heard about bears no resemblance to my dear enthusiastic boy. I believe if you will spare me, that I will run over and see him."

That was about three months before the wedding day and she had felt just a little superstitious about it, but she laid the feeling aside and told Jack that she loved him all the more for wanting to go. So he had gone, seen Ned, and come back, saddened, but in a way comforted too. Ned had been so unfeignedly glad to see him. At the last moment, before he left him, Ned had given a half promise to come to California in the near future. That was two years before, and now, here he was. Bessie felt something almost like fear at his coming. It seemed like the entrance into their happy life of some mystery

which might enfold unknown evils. She was rapidly sinking into abject melancholy when a lovely thing, with a long slanting sail glowing red in the low sunlight, came gliding swiftly toward the shore. It looked like some gay tropical bird that, sailing now on the blue sea, might at any moment spread its wings and fly away to the blue heaven above. It seemed a sentient thing, alive and full of joy.

Bessie ran quickly up on to the wharf. As the boat came nearer she saw Jack lying at full length on the deck. There were two other men aboard. One was the boatman, dark and swarthy, with bare and brawny arms; the other was Ned. As they touched the wharf Jack sprang ashore and ran to meet Bessie. After the first greeting, she said:

"Aren't you going to help them?"

"Oh, no," he replied, "leave that to Ned. He has spent most of his time for the last two years sailing in that sort of thing on the Mediterranean. He has sailed her all the way, and I feel that she belongs to

him. Bessie," he added, "you will be glad to see Ned, won't you?"

It was not a question, but a request, and she smiled an answer as the boat swung into its place and they turned to meet their guest. Ned looked ten years older than Jack. He had dark hair, already so gray as to be almost light. His face was bronzed by exposure to wind and sun, but still delicate and refined almost to effeminacy. There was a droop about the mouth that was not pleasing, and a stiff, formal expression in the face which Bessie somehow knew had not been there until she appeared. She understood him in part at least, in an instant. He was one of those men whom women instinctively adore, and who as instinctively dread the adoration to which they are subjected. He was, she felt sure, not a woman lover, if he was not a woman hater. She saw it and laughed to herself, because she knew that he had nothing to fear from her. Jack and she were such good friends that she could meet his friends with the same cordial comradeship as though she had been

his brother. Without waiting for an introduction she went up to Ned and held out her hand.

"I am much obliged to you for bringing Jack safely home," she said; "I am very glad indeed that you have come to El Ermita."

She looked him straight in the eyes in a manly sort of way, and instantly his eyes answered with a frank smile although his mouth did not smile. He shook her hand cordially and they all went up to the house, talking about the sail down, the boat, and other indifferent subjects. They stopped on the way to look at the hyacinths which, having been planted late, were just coming up.

Bessie did not play the hostess in any way, feeling sure that he would not be so comfortable if she made him feel that he was her guest.

After dinner they sat for a little while on the porch; then Jack and Bessie, having many things to talk over and it being a little cool, went into the sitting room; Ned lighted a fresh cigar and started off down toward the sea. The rooms of the

The night was far  
were wakened by  
singing high up on t  
aloud to the earth ar

"What is it?" B  
to Jack. "Is it Ned

"Yes, dearest," he  
added, "Poor Ned!"

Soon after, his f  
their room on the wa

In the morning w  
combing her hair bef  
table Jack came and  
her, looking down in  
the mirror with such a  
sion that it troubled  
took her head between  
kissed the soft dark lo

"Bessie," he said

you put such responsibility upon me.  
What shall I do?"

"Nothing," he answered; "it is not  
what you do, but what you are, dear  
love."

Then, although he said no more,  
Bessie thought she knew what it was  
that had warped out of all usefulness  
the life of his friend.







## II.

**T**HE coast of California, from the cliffs that run out from the northern shores of Monterey Bay to the pebbly beaches of Pescadero, is one long stretch of sandy headland. For countless years the waves have dashed themselves against the crumbly cliffs, mining into them ragged coves and curving out beds for beaches of white sand. A road runs along the cliff, sometimes creeping to the very edge and almost moistened by the spray of the breaking waves, or losing itself mid clumps of live oak in the inland ravines. Back from the shores rounded hills rise smooth and peaceful, and above them, farther back, clothed in blue mist, an occasional jagged peak touches the clouds. Mountain

streams come tumbling down the cañons through luxurious growth of trees, flowers, and ferns to the white sand and the sea.

In the early days the Spaniards and Indians used the valleys and hills between sea and mountains for their ranchos. Their cattle grazed on the hills and in the valleys nestled their homes. Later the Americans came. They established dairy farms at the old haciendas and attempted to graft on to the old Spanish-Indian civilization the pushing activity which they call progress. It was in vain. The genius of the land triumphed over them. Their farms are deserted, the herds have been scattered, and the rude houses and cow sheds have fallen into decay.

Three years before our story opens a party of campers were loitering on their way from Santa Cruz to Pescadero through this country and along the road by the cliff. The sun was low in the west and the bare hills had that lonely desolate look which makes one long for the comfort of a fireside, when the campers came sud-

---

denly down a steep hill into a group of live oaks. There was no sign of any habitation and the road before them rose abruptly to the highland. Toward the sea opened a narrow defile and through this a path wound. Following it they found themselves in a dense grove of cypress. In the gathering twilight the place seemed an enchanted forest. Wierd distorted trees stretched themselves over the ground like strange monsters held in thrall by some magician's power; here and there they reached their twisted arms high into the air as if pleading to be restored to their rightful position. Beyond the grove they found a low adobe building. Its white walls and windows reflected the rays of the setting sun. It looked out on a long stretch of meadow land toward the sea. Before it nestled a placid lake, and about it rose the cliffs, bright with yellow lilies and purple lupins. Near the shore were the wind-swept dunes of yellow sand and beyond was the wide plain of the Pacific.

Many were the exclamations of

delight and pleasure made by all of the party, but one among them, Jack Winthrop, said to himself, "Here will I rest, and roam no more, for this is home." When, after a few days, the rest of the party prepared to go on, he told them that he had decided to return by way of Santa Cruz, and bade them good-by.

Winthrop's work, which was literary, was such that it could go with him wherever he went, and he was fascinated with the idea of making this deserted dairy farm his home. He and Bessie talked it over. He gave her the most glowing description of the place and of the manifold delights to be found there. She consented that it should be their home, but knowing that a man who wishes to do anything in the world must himself be a part of it, insisted that they should plan to spend some part of every year in the busy places of the workaday world. There was little or no trouble about making the purchase. It was at first to be a bachelor establishment, but everything was planned for the time,

which was soon to be, when it should be more. They called it El Ermita.

Early the next summer Jack and Bessie were married. They went immediately to El Ermita and spent a long delicious summer wandering on the shore, climbing the cliffs, and, between working and playing, became thoroughly acquainted with each other, happily finding that they were more than lovers—the best and dearest of friends.

Three years saw many changes in the place. The meadow in front was divided by the stream that came clear and cold from the mountain, and there had been planted on its farther bank a hedge of Japanese bamboo. Lovely yellow marigolds tossed their gay heads and laughed along the shore of the lagoon, to which a broad path lined with fragrant flowers led the way. The old adobe house had not been changed in character; the porch had been widened, the red tiled roof brought out, on its own gentle indolent slope, to make a great out-of-doors sitting

room. They lived in this room. The air came to them laden with the perfume of all the sweetest flowers and vitalized by the strong salt breath of the ocean. A hammock swung in a rustic arbor which was so covered by the quick growing passion vine that it might have been built by the Spaniards a hundred years before. Inside the house the floors were covered with fresh matting and the windows hung with gay chintz, while everything was homely in its best and most useful sense. The great rambling sitting room was an especial delight to them. It was long and low. The ceiling, which was barely high enough at the walls to allow Jack to stretch his six feet two up straight, sloped unevenly toward the roof, and the room itself, after running for thirty feet along the southern porch, wandered off around a corner to the east. When the Winthrops first came there, the fireplace was simply a place for a fire, with a rough-hewn board for a mantle shelf. Fortunately it was in the corner of the room and was very

large, and they had made of it an inglenook to warm one's heart in. It was made of redwood and gray tiles. On one side were shelves for magazines and papers, on the other a deep easy-chair, that seemed to wait for some white-haired old grandfather. The shelf at the top was gay with brass candlesticks and bits of china, while into the broad chimney breast was etched in quaint Old English Spenser's alluring invitation:

"O turne thy rudder hetherward awhile,  
Here may thy storme-bett vessell safely  
ryde ;  
This is the Port of rest from troublous  
toyle,  
The worlde's sweet In from paine and weari-  
some turmoyle."

A couch and window seat, all in one, occupied the corner opposite the fireplace. It was low and was piled full of cushions, some of which were filled with fragrant lavender. The rough plaster walls were soft gray; the woodwork was everywhere redwood, its beautiful pink color unspoiled by varnish. The furniture

was bronzed rattan, comfortable and simple. All day long the doors and windows stood open; the songs of birds and the perfume of roses filled the air.





III.

**N**ATURALLY, s  
have been fo  
when Ned we  
they were no  
that he did not  
next morning, but when  
Dan instructions to giv  
breakfast whenever he  
ready for it, Dan said:

"Oh, he done had he  
long 'go and gone sailin'  
'long ob dat Tony."

"Never mind, Bessie,"  
"just let him alone; he is

mean," he laughingly added, "with you, of course."

Bessie smiled. "I will do the best I can, of course, Jack, but just at present that would seem to be nothing at all."

She put on her big hat, took her gloves, scissors, and some twine and, calling to Janet to bring the baby out into the garden, went to work tying up the sweet peas while Jack lit a cigar and strolled off down to the beach, being in the mind to take a holiday in Ned's honor if he could find him.

When he reached the beach he saw the bright sail just coming in with a brisk breeze, Ned looking as contented as possible, with the tiller in his hand. He went down to the wharf and Tony held up with pride the shining pompanoes which they had brought in.

"Jack," said Ned, "do you know this is a veritable paradise that you have found here. It has every requisite, even to the one most necessary to my idea of paradise—it is apparently uninhabited. Why it seemed

to me as if we were on a voyage of discovery this morning."

"You will find that it has been discovered not once, but several times, and each discoverer has left his mark on it. But the best of the sea and hills is that they are discoveries for each one of us, new every day."

"What a strange formation this coast has," said Ned. "It seems to be nothing but piled up sand with now and again a few rocks or stones in it. I do not see how that soft sandstone makes any resistance to the heavy seas. Does it change very fast?"

"I do not know," said Jack. "This is the second summer which we have spent here, and I do not see that there is any change yet. Yes, there is too," he added. "The rocks have fallen there, where you see that little island yonder with the large rocks between it and the mainland; that was what we call a natural bridge when I first came here, three years ago next July."

"At that rate I would not take a lease of El Ermita for five hundred

"I do not concern myself about things five hundred years from now," said Jack, "and although the coast is certainly changing and being honeycombed into caves and beaches, I think that it will last our time. Well, Bessie," as they came suddenly upon where she was working, "why do you work so hard? You look so warm and tired."

"I have done enough for to-day," she answered, rising and looking with pride at the long line of vines which she had tied. She gathered up her twine and scissors and walked beside them toward the house.

"I heard you talking about the caves, Jack," she said. "I have found the most -"

... tide," said Ned, and  
them of some wonder  
he had seen the sum  
the coast of Norway.  
but was still enthusia  
as she called them, th  
of their walls, the  
mosses hanging from t  
all the tiny sea-folk t  
homes there. So, s  
they reached the hous  
to luncheon.

It soon appeared  
perfectly satisfied to dr  
as one of the family;  
as he chose. He ram  
over the country, son  
sometimes joining Jac

...not go, but then she also knew that she would not at all enjoy being left behind. Jack and she had always gone together and, determining not to let the wedge of a change enter their contented life, she answered merrily:

"I? Of course I want to go. When will you start?"

"In about ten minutes," Jack said.

When they were ready, there was Bessie also in her simple blue climbing dress with her alpenstock in her hand, and a tiny basket over her shoulder in which were paté sandwiches and a thimbleful of sherry with which they could refresh themselves after the climb.

Jack and Ned fell naturally to talking of old times as they

appeared. She was cold and had brought her basket, and, as their way led to the banks of the little stream, she began to dig for any fine roots which she found, so she was sometimes quiet and sometimes quick. When she looked around and saw Jack, she whistled at him which he instantly answered, and then she went contented. It must be noted that although Jack was engrossed in his task, he never really lost sight of her, and he was fastening the ribboning ribbons on Bessie's head.

After rather a long climb, they arrived at the top of the hill, and Jack, with a

on which her tired children could find sweet repose lower down were the woods and rocks and the strip of beach with its long lines of white foam, and the beyond, the wonderful heaving changing sea.

Ned seemed to be transformed. The last shade of discontent and moodiness left his face and he was almost gay. They ate the sandwiches, then Bessie filled the cup from her flask and holding it up said solemnly:

"This is a magic cup. Listen, oh mountain and sea! Here we three in your presence promise to be always loyal and true."

She drank a little and handed it to Jack who laughed.



Then Bessie told them in her own gay manner a story of Frank Stockton's which she had read the night before, and they sat and watched the sun drop off to the western sky. The sea, so blue, was beginning to take on a silvery hue in the slanting rays, and above the red light in the west, floating apparently in liquid light, shone the steadfast evening star.

Presently, without any word, Ned, who was lying face upward on the rocks, a little below where Jack and Bessie were sitting, began to sing. He sang Wolfram's song from "Tannhäuser":

"O du mein holder Abendstern  
Wohl grüsst ich immer dich so gern,  
Vom Herzen das sie nieverreith  
Grüsse sie wenn sie vorbei dir zieht.  
Wenn sie entschwebt dem Thal der Erden,  
Ein selger Engel dort zu werden,  
Wenn sie entschwebt dem Thal der Erden,  
Ein selger Engel dort zu werden."

The effect was indescribable. His voice, so true, with its manly strength, its penetrating sympathy, can best be described by the one word satisfying. It was in harmony with all around;

the heaven bending over them, the sea reflecting back to its home in the sky the light that suffused it; the now darkening mountain and even the withered old trees, all seemed to listen and give thanks for this beautiful evening song. No music within the walls of a stifling theater ever had such audience or gave such joy. Bessie's hand stole into Jack's and they sat quite still until the last note was silent, then they all went quietly down and home in the gloaming; and it seemed to them that some mysterious bond was made between them; that their lives had grown together as in the twisted strands of a rope that should not easily be broken.





#### IV.

“ Oh, stay, oh, stay !  
Joy so seldom weaves a chain  
Like this, that oh, 'tis pain  
To break its links too soon.”



FORTNIGHT or so  
passed away when Ned  
coming in from the cyp  
grove one day, said:

“Jack, there is a little  
cabin out on the edge of the cyp  
wood which I wish that you would  
give to me for the summer. I do  
not think of going away, and I want  
to go to work. Something in the  
bracing sea air fills me with en-  
thusiasm, and I think that place would  
make just the right sort of a work-  
shop for me.”

Bessie opened her lips to speak  
evidently in protest, but Jack said:

“Certainly, Ned, do whatever  
please.”

what kind of workshop do you mean to have?"

Ned smiled a little and said: "No, you cannot help me, because it is to be only and really a place to work in, and Tony and I will do all that is necessary. I will send to Santa Cruz for all I need."

For a week or so Tony swept and aired the cabin and made huge fires in the fireplace. Then there arrived from Santa Cruz a wagonload of things, chief among which Bessie saw a small upright piano.

"This is really too absurd, Ned," said she. "You know that my piano is just longing to have someone play on it, and it would be such a pleasure to me if you would use it."

like yours for work of that sort. I do not really play on the piano, I only use it in working out my harmonies."

Bessie had been listening to him with wide, interested eyes. "An opera!" she began; "will you tell me about it—your opera?"

"Yes," he said; "there is not much done on it yet, but I will tell you about it this evening and then you will understand why this is just the place for me to work, because I want the sea and the wind and the trees."

Bessie went back to the porch well content. That evening, while they were sitting together after dinner, Ned told them about his work.

"When I was studying in Munich," he began, "the idea took possession of me that operas as they are generally written and sung are, to a great extent, inartistic. At last it became impossible for me to listen to any one of them, even 'Lohengrin' or 'The Flying Dutchman,' without continually thinking of the crudeness, not indeed of these masterpieces of the great Master, but of the underlying,

, under an varied circumstances which can arise, the actors represented as singing, is manifest. Yet, I reasoned, it is not that emotions are not fittingly expressed by music; they are, from the strongest to the very lightest, and far better than by spoken words or gesture. How then, I asked myself, can we represent on the stage most powerfully and perfectly events which involve human passions and emotions; and yet not offend natural expression? I came at length to have a well formed theory as to how it could be done, and partly to satisfy myself and partly in the real hope of accomplishing something, I have planned a musical composition in which the scenes are

which are like the play of the emotions of the soul on the face of man.

"There is to be no singing in the accepted meaning of the word, except when there would naturally be in real life; when other words are actually necessary, they will be said or chanted rhythmically in harmony with the music. I have chosen the story of Tristram and Yseult because it is so suited to that kind of expression, but I believe that almost any other could also be given in the same manner. I worked at it quite steadily for a little while before I went to Norway last summer, then threw it aside. Since I have been here it comes back to me as something which must be done. Perhaps I shall finish it," he added half to himself, being already absorbed in looking over the manuscripts which he had brought in. He began to read the libretto and went on:

"I have taken Swinburne's words whenever I could, although I have not followed strictly his version of the story because it does not let

itself so well to my purpose, but for the first act it is perfect, and I have opened the first scene on the deck of the ship at the moment when, innocent and thoughtless, Yseult is sailing over a calm sea toward Cornwall. Tristram sings to divert her and make the time less wearisome. Here I have taken a part of one of the songs as Swinburne has written it and set it to music with harp accompaniment. Some of the tableaux are fixed and some moving, and this of course leaves a great deal to the scenic manager, but that is nothing; there is very little that cannot be represented nowadays. The music, however, expresses everything; in the beginning it is gay and light, having the motion and sound of the waves all through the happy little scene between Tristram and Yseult. Then the storm comes and the scene changes; the ocean roars and the wind shrieks, but there is no singing, and when the sea grows calm and Tristram, weary with his exertions, seeks Yseult, the few necessary words are spoken, only the music sounds a note of alarm as if to



call a soldier to his duty and the sun gleams out luridly from beneath the clouds while Yseult empties the fatal vial, drinks and gives it to Tristram to drink. Now every sound ceases for an instant; the violins and flutes begin a soft, sensuous melody, keeping always the movement of the waves while they stand looking into each others eyes, wrapt forevermore from all the rest of the world, bound forever to each other. No useless word is spoken or sung. Right here I have written what I call 'A Song of the Sirens,' but I am not sure that I shall use it; my intention was to have it either played by flutes or sung by unseen women. It is a kind of exultation of evil spirits over the downfall of the great knight and the lovely lady. Of course I write a great many things that I find are not suitable because, in spite of myself, I fall into the conventional lines. There is no hurry, however."

"The idea is very good," Jack said, "and I would like to see such an opera, but I am afraid that very

few people would know what it was about."

"You are mistaken," Ned answered; "just as many people would understand it as understand a beautiful picture or a grand poem or a wonderful sunset. That is," he added, smiling, "no one would understand it in the same way that I do, but it would be a true thing, so each one could take something true from it—whatever he wanted or was able to."

"Have you brought some of the music in to play or sing for us?" Bessie asked.

"No, not exactly," he said; "I found one scene in my trunk when I was looking for the libretto. It is the one where Yseult is alone in Tintagle after she is separated from Tristram. I have worked out my idea more completely in that than in any other part, because she is alone through the whole scene, and her words are spoken or chanted more as an accompaniment to the grand music of the wind and the waves than as claiming prior attention. I cannot

sing it myself and could give you little idea of it with my violin; besides it is unfinished," he said, holding it in his hand and looking it over.

"Ned," said Jack, "I do not quite agree with you in this idea, anyway. I think that singing is the natural way for human beings to express their emotions. I am sure that all nations and people have sung; all have religious or praise music; all have martial music. I even go further and think that all animals sing, or make little happy sounds when things are well with them and complaining sounds when things are wrong."

"That is just it," Ned answered. "You have exactly the same idea that I have, only differently expressed. It is to find the sounds with which nature expresses passion truly and naturally that I am striving, whether it be in song or in shriek, moan or muttering. Of course," he added, "it is an experiment and must stand or fall by its own strength."

"I think it very true," said Bessie, "that sound without words is the

...has a gram of sense  
would know whether he is pleased  
and happy or not. And as far  
singing is concerned, I have heard  
great deal that people thought very  
wonderful, which was really worth  
to hear, if you listened truly, than his  
most frantic screaming, and it is  
very easy to know whether that ex-  
presses anger or grief or pain."

"Well," said Ned, laughing, "I  
will remember that and may per-  
haps bring my violin and try to get  
his most frantic screaming, as you  
call it."

"I would rather have you catch  
his softest cooing," she answered,  
smiling.

There followed now for these  
people of our state

it could not be a second time experienced.

Jack hoped that the book which he was then writing would place him side by side with the foremost writers of fiction of the day. He had laid the opening scenes in a little village in Norway where Ned and he had spent a week the year before he went to Japan, and it was most opportune that Ned should have come just now, because their long talks brought back everything to him fresh and strong; he thought that the effect on the story was good.

Ned's work was done partly in the little cabin, from which Bessie, swinging in her hammock or perched high upon one of the branches of an accommodating cypress tree, would sometimes hear a melody softly played on the violin or the sound of the piano, as he worked on the orchestration of his composition. Much of his work was also done upon the cliffs or down on the dripping rocks, under the stars as often as by daylight.

Each went his own way until about

sued as to what brightest pleased the day offered. Sometimes it was sail on the enchanted sea; sometimes a long climb on the cliffs or mountains, or if the tide was very low they explored the caves for miles along the weather-beaten coast.

One cave in particular was a delightful place during the hot summer afternoons; it was the one which Bessie had found while Jack was away.

The entrance to it could only be reached when the tide was very low, a spit of rocks over which the surf broke defending it at other times. Once inside, however, one could walk quite a long way, stooping a little occasionally to pass from one chamber

to see how high the water came up. But that "next time" did not come. The walls of the cave were very lovely, shading from deep purple to pink and toned with soft olives and browns. Bessie used to sit high up on the white sand while Jack and Ned lay lower down at full length and smoked their cigars. She entertained them with wonderful stories which she loved to tell just as they came into her head. Sometimes they were tales of mermaids who lived all about there and had this cave for a trysting place with their lovers; sometimes she invented terrible stories of smugglers whose treasure was buried there, while their bones lay white at the bottom of the sea and their restless ghosts moaned about the cave on stormy nights. But chiefly, being always at heart a rebel against all government, she pictured oppressed and injured people flying from their enemies and taking refuge in the cave; making there a lovely home and issuing thence to take dire vengeance on their cruel foes. Having a great fancy for giving

everything a name, she called it "l'Asile."

One morning, Jack being in his study and Ned in the cabin, Bessie sat down to work at one of Schumann's sonatas. She was a fair musician, and had been playing for half an hour or so when Ned came in with his violin and the same sonata arranged for piano and violin.

"It will help you," he said, and without more ado commenced to play. Bessie had never played duets and was at first a little nervous, but Ned was patient and she enthusiastic, so in a little while they found that they had a new and great pleasure added to their daily life; it became the usual close of the day that Jack should lie on the couch in the corner smoking quietly while Bessie and Ned played endlessly until the wee small hours. Jack was so happy and proud to see how like the Ned of old times his friend had grown under the magic influence of his little wife; Ned was so truly and loyally devoted to Jack and to Jack's dear wife, and Bessie, gay and debonair, walked



softly, as if on holy ground, the holy ground trodden indeed always by the pure in heart.


The afternoons were growing shorter and the low sunlight was beginning to take its ripe autumn tinge, when one day in September the three friends came in from a stroll, to find in the porch room a pile of letters which had just come up from Santa Cruz. Each became immediately absorbed in his own until an exclamation from Bessie made the others lay their letters down to see what had happened.

"Jack!" she said holding an open letter in her hand, her face flushed with excitement. "What do you think? It is from Helen. She has been at home for a week and is coming down here. Oh, I am so glad! aren't you, Jack?"

As Bessie spoke she looked over at Ned and saw the old forbidding look coming into his face.

"O Ned!" she said, "do not look like that. It is only my sister Helen."

He smiled rather sadly and said:



"We have been happy for a long time. Nothing lasts forever."

"Helen will not spoil anything," Bessie said. "If you only knew her you would be glad that she is coming."

Then getting up she went over to him and, standing very near to him, said softly:

"Please, dear Ned, do not let Helen's coming spoil our beautiful life."

He was silent for a moment then his eyes smiled into her face, he took her little hand and raised it to his lips, saying:

"I will try, dear sister Bessie."

She stood still looking at him wistfully, her lips parted as if to speak, but with some strange spell upon them that kept the words back. Many, many sad hours in the days to come did Bessie wonder what was the fatal seal upon her lips, why did she not speak then when speaking would have been easy and natural and would have saved——

She had an undefined feeling that it would not be fair to Helen because

she knew quite well that a woman with a story would be a horror to Ned. In her excitement she had not noticed the date of the letter nor what day Helen said that she would come. She was still standing by Ned with an earnest questioning look, which he was waiting for her to explain, when they heard the voice of a driver out in the winding carriage road speaking to his horses, and in another minute Helen was there. Bessie rushed down from the porch and clasped her in her arms almost before her feet touched the ground, and kissing her lips and cheeks forgot that there was anything to tell.





V.

**H**ELEN MORRIS was Bessie's cousin by birth and her sister by adoption. Their fathers, who were brothers, came to San Francisco together in 1860, and after a time both married and made their homes there. They were partners in business, though Helen's father, being some years the elder, had a larger interest in the business. Fortunately their wives were congenial so they lived very intimately, usually taking their pleasures together.

One day, when Helen was about five years old, the two brothers went out for their daily ride in the park and along the beach. The horse which the elder brother rode was a new one which he was trying, intend-

ing to purchase it if it proved satisfactory. They had taken a brisk canter through one of the bridle paths and were riding slowly toward the beach, very much interested in what they were talking about and paying little attention to the horses. As they came around the curve of Strawberry Hill some men unloaded, with a loud crash, a wagon full of water pipes. The strange horse took sudden and uncontrollable fright, started back and fell, throwing his rider violently against a pile of rocks, killing him instantly. He was lifted up and taken to his brother's house, while that brother, frantic with grief and horror, went to break the news to his wife.

Bessie, who was a very little girl, always remembered quite well how they brought her uncle and laid him on a bed, how in a little while her father came leading her Aunt Nellie, and how she stood, white and still, staring at the bed, then stretching out weak and helpless hands, sank down on to the floor. She remembered that her father stooped down

gay, bright nursery where she found  
Helen. Her mother put her hand  
Helen's and said:

"Bessie, will you be very kind and  
good to Helen to-day, for we are in  
great trouble?"

Bessie said, "Mamma, why do you  
cry and why did Aunt Nellie lie on  
the floor?" Her mother only said  
"If you want to help mamma you  
will be very good to Helen."

Bessie understood that there was  
responsibility placed upon her and  
said solemnly, "I will be good."  
When her mother had gone, she got  
out her best teaset and they made  
tea for the dolls, who sat around  
primly in their various carriages and  
cradles. When the little girls were

able to gather up he  
let it slip through  
fingers. Bessie's fat  
came one day into th  
the children were pl  
looked tired and  
Morris took Helen up  
laying her sunny he  
breast, smoothed her  
her. At this Bessie c  
against him too. He  
around her and said,  
girls, my two little da

Helen and Bessie w  
time practically sister  
so near of an age that  
thing together, had ev  
but while they did no  
they knew of course t

and then she knew nothing of the power of beauty. For the rest they learned the things that most girls learn, went to the same school, learned to play on the piano, to sing, to dance, and swim; in short studied all that fashion or custom ordains, without either of them displaying especial talent, unless Helen's voice be excepted. That was a gift, pure and simple. It was a rich and soft contralto, and might have been very beautiful, but Helen did not care for music, and while she took lessons in singing, she certainly did not study.

Time passed. Helen was seventeen; would be eighteen in the coming winter, and it was decided that she might go to Del Monte for the summer, and Bessie being yet hardly sixteen, was to be "banished," so she called it, to the farm in Sonoma. This was the first time that any difference had been made between them, and Bessie's heart was hot with resentment that she should be so cruelly treated, "just for a matter of a year or two." However the cir-



cumstances were peculiar. An aunt, on the mother's side, had come to California for a long visit, and she wished to take her niece to Monterey with her. She invited Bessie, of course, but Mrs. Morris, while she felt obliged, however unwillingly, to let Helen go, refused even to hear of Bessie's accompanying her.

They parted with heavy hearts, Bessie, after a day or two of moping, to spend a merry child's summer on the old farm, Helen to change all at once into a woman in the hot-house atmosphere of the gay watering-place. From a simple, calm home life she stepped at once into a new world. Picnics, swimming, tennis, riding, made up the days; the evenings were spent at the bowling alley or in wandering in merry groups about the enchanted grounds of the wonderful gardens.


From the first Helen was much admired; she was so gay and debonair; and entered so joyfully into everything that was going on. Among the many who admired the beautiful girl there was one who

charmed her. He was a young Spaniard, José de Santa Yberri, who had come up from his rancho near Los Angeles, and was spending the summer between San Francisco and Monterey.

From the beginning of their acquaintance he seemed to be irresistibly attracted to Helen. His nature was as much a contrast to hers as his olive skin and soft languorous eyes were to her fair delicate beauty and laughing bright eyes. It was the witchery of contrast that drew them together. He threw himself at her feet with an adoring abandon that no girl of her utter inexperience could have resisted. He was always with her, he anticipated every wish, the least glance of her eye was a command to him. Finally when her aunt brought her home, on the first of September, they only waited Mr. Morris' consent to announce their engagement.

Mr. Morris was anything but pleased with the result of the summer's outing, and said he would take time to consider the matter, thereby

causing a little cloud to arise between Helen and himself. She thought and said that he ought to be able to read in José's face his real nobility and goodness; that it was an insult to her to doubt José, and so forth. Mr. Morris was inflexible, however, and forbade anything like an engagement until he should give them his decision. After a week or so he went south for a few days. When he came home he was tired, worried, and out of sorts. He called his wife into the library and they talked until late into the night. Helen and Bessie went to bed, but not to sleep. They were almost equally excited, Bessie sharing Helen's enthusiastic admiration of the handsome Spaniard. When Mrs. Morris went up to her room, Helen slipped out of bed and went out into the hall to speak to her, but when she saw on her sad face the traces of recent tears only said good-night and crept back to bed, whence in a moment Bessie heard the sound of smothered sobs. In an instant she had left her own bed and slipped into Helen's. She put her arms close



around her and mingling their tears they soon slept.

The next morning Mr. Morris sent for José de Santa Yberri, and they talked long and earnestly while the girls wandered about like restless ghosts. After a while the library door opened and the two men went together down the hall. \* Mr. Morris opened the door for his guest to pass out and said :

"I will talk to my daughter and you can come for your answer to-night at eight, but I tell you frankly I do not like it."

So much the girls heard; then he shut the door, went back to the library, and sent for Helen. When the trembling girl reached the room she saw at a glance that her father was embarrassed and her courage rose.

"Helen, my dear child," he began, "you know that you are the same to me as my own daughter, yet I feel a double responsibility now and seem to be speaking to you for your own father and for myself as well. I must tell you, dear, that I cannot approve of this man whom

you have met, and I hope that you will dismiss him from your mind and let me send him away."

"Why, papa," said Helen, standing with her wide violet eyes looking straight into his, "why should I send him away?"

"Well," he answered with hesitation, "he is not the sort of man that an American likes to have his daughter marry; his past life has not been what it ought to have been," and he weakly added, "I think that Americans girls are apt to be unhappy as the wives of foreigners."

Helen laughed merrily as she said:

"I do not mind what life José has led, he will live a beautiful one with me, and for me, and I am very glad that he is not an American, papa. No Americans have such lovely ways as he has—except you, papa, I mean," she added, and coming suddenly up and throwing herself into Mr. Morris' arms, she burst into tears, saying, "Oh, papa, I love him so, I cannot live without him."

Now Mr. Morris could not be

relied upon when it was a question of a womans' tears, so he said:

"Don't cry, Nellie darling, please don't cry. If you are certain that you love him so much, we must try to make the best of it. But I do not like it," he added, as he kissed her and let her go.

When Mr. Morris went to Los Angeles to inquire about the life and character of Mr. Yberri, he found that he was of what is known as a good Spanish family, well enough off regarding money and property, but that his life had been one of unrestrained license and, moreover, that there was living at his house, the home to which he proposed soon to take his young wife, a Frenchwoman whom many people called Mme. Yberri, and who had certainly been mistress of the establishment for two years or more. Mr. Morris taxed José with this and he frankly admitted it, but said that he had long been tired of the woman, and swore by all the saints in the calendar that his wife should never even hear of her existence.

Helen's money was so tied up that she could have only the income from it until she was twenty-five, and when Mr. Morris told this to José, he seemed so frankly pleased about it that he made a favorable impression; at least he convinced Mr. Morris that it was the girl he loved and that her money had not been a factor in the matter.

Undoubtedly this influenced Mr. Morris a little; anyway he yielded his consent, although reluctantly.

He had decided with Mrs. Morris that Helen should not be told.

"The child does not know that such things exist; it would sadden her young life too much," said Mrs. Morris through her tears.

If they could only have known it, the simple truth, plainly told, would have released them from this painful position, and have averted the overwhelming misfortune which was coming; and for which, when it came, they were sure to blame fate or Providence instead of their own weak hearts.

Helen added to the innocence of a

dove a peculiar straightforwardness of character which would have made it impossible for her to call black white to herself even for a moment, or to have loved that which was soiled in her eyes.

There were a few gay, happy weeks, and then José went home to prepare for his bride, and the two girls plunged with girlish delight into the mysteries of the trousseau. Bessie was to be first bridesmaid, the wedding a grand affair in Grace Church, with a reception afterward. Every detail, from the flowers which were to adorn the beautiful church and the music which was to be played on the organ, to the color of the bridesmaids' slippers, was carefully and thoughtfully discussed, Bessie being to the last degree important and excited about all.

One day Helen and Bessie were tying up the bridesmaids' favors, when suddenly, opening wide her fawn-like eyes, Bessie exclaimed:

"But, Helen, you have never really been in society. You do not know any other men; suppose you



do not really love José best of all?"

Helen laughed a merry rippling laugh and kissed her engagement ring; then the quick tears came into her eyes and she said:

"O Bessie, I would rather be unhappy with him than happy with anyone else. I love him so."

They were married on Helen's birthday and left at once for their southern home. At first the letters came often, but not too often. They were always happy and full of interest in her new home. This for about eight months; then they became fewer in number, shorter and more formal, and Mrs. Morris began to look troubled when she found one of them lying at her place at the breakfast table.

At this time Bessie received an invitation from some of her father's friends to go with them to China and Japan, and with a thousand anticipations of delight sailed on the first of January, to be gone six months or more.

Mrs. Morris knew that Helen ex-

pected to become a mother early in March, therefore when a month, and then six weeks, passed and no answers were received to letters, she became really alarmed, and her trunk was already packed to go to Helen when she received a telegram signed "Dr. Harris," saying, "Mme. Yberri is very ill, come at once."

No time was lost; Mrs. Morris reached Los Angeles and took a carriage immediately for Los Narraños, Helen's home. When she came up to the broad veranda, no one was there to meet her. She sent the man away, went up the steps to the open door, and rang the bell. Presently a Chinese servant came part of the way down the hall and said:

"Velly sick, no see anybody; go way," and disappeared.

Mrs. Morris went on through the house, and hearing someone moving in a room at the end of the hall, opened the door. It was Helen's room. She lay on the bed, white and still, sleeping or unconscious. Moving about in a slow, mechanical way was a fat old woman who looked

up at Mrs. Morris without any expression of interest on her face. Beckoning to the woman to come out of the room, she briefly informed her who she was and questioned her about the patient. The nurse said that the baby had been born two days before; that it had only lived a few hours; that the mother had had convulsions until that morning and was now unconscious, and that the doctor said there was not much chance for her. When asked about Mr. Yberri, she said:

"I do not know ; I have not seen him."

With a heavy heart Mrs. Morris took her place by the bedside of the sufferer, and waited and watched. Days and weeks passed and the patient slowly and surely came back to life. At last she lay on the veranda on a long Japanese chair, her face almost as white as her pillows, her hands as thin and delicate as the jasmine blossoms which they held. The mother had not spoken of José. She felt that there were sorrow and tragedy

enough to bear it. Now she sat beside her holding one little thin hand in hers and telling amusing stories of Bessie's adventures in China and Japan. Suddenly Helen said:

"Will you bring my portfolio, mamma, dear? It is on my desk."

When it was laid on her lap she opened it, took from it a letter which had her name on the outside without any address, and which evidently had not come through the post office. Silently she drew the letter from the envelope and handed it to her mother, who as silently opened and read it. It was dated the fifth of December and said:

"I cannot stand this humdrum life any longer and I am off. You had better go back to your puritanical old father or uncle, whichever he is. Of course, if you wish, you can stay; but I shall not come back while you are here."

That was all. Wrapped in the tender, loving arms that folded her close, she slowly told her pitiful little story.

How José had at first been happy, then bored, then strange, staying away from home for days at a time; how it had come to be known to her that he had yielded to the fascination of his old mistress and that he had now gone with her to his old home in Peru. She uttered no word of reproach, but once she asked:

"Did you and papa know?"

When her mother bowed her head, she turned away with a broken-hearted sigh. In May they brought her home again. She tried to assume a cheerful air, to seem to care for the old home life, but it was in vain.

One night she went into the library where Mr. Morris sat before the fire. She sat down on the floor at his feet and laid her head on his knees, then gave him an open letter. He took it, but the tears came into his eyes, and before he read it he smoothed the bright golden hair and kissed her white forehead. The letter was from her Aunt Charlotte, asking her to go to Europe with her for a year.

"Do you wish to go, Nellie?" he asked.

She looked up bravely and said, "No, papa, but I think it will be easier there, and if I am going to live, I will try to make something of my life yet."

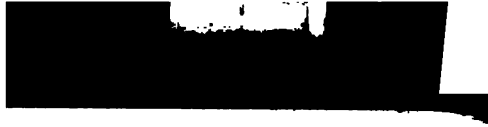
He praised her and called her his brave little girl. He was unfeignedly anxious to help her to be happy in any way that was possible, so when she nestled up to him and said:

"Papa, dear, I shall never see *him* again, and I want my own dear name back. I can have it, can't I?"

He answered, "Yes, you may do just as you wish."

He did not know that in being weakly kind he was most cruel.

When a week later Helen left for New York, her trunk was marked: "Helen Morris, San Francisco," and her ticket bore the same name.



## VI.

“ Who is Sylvia? What is she  
That all her swains adore her? ”

**T**HE long slanting rays of the afternoon sun streamed into the porch as Bessie unclasped her arms from Helen's neck, and holding her hand, turned to present the gentlemen. She saw in their faces, in that look of involuntary worship that all men give to a really beautiful woman, how very fair Helen was, and while they were making their first welcoming speeches, she turned and looked closely at her. She stood there with the sunlight tangled in her red-gold hair, tall enough to look slender, though with a royal figure; strong, young, and apparently happy, yet with an expression about the warm, quiet eyes and tender but firm mouth

that showed something held in reserve, something which said to Bessie that they were on trial, that Helen had come back to see if the old friends and home were really as she remembered them. The impression was painful to Bessie and for a moment chilled her. Then Helen turned from Jack and Ned, saying:

"But surely, Bessie, you are going to show me another member of your family. I supposed him to be altogether the most important of all."

Her smile was very sweet, and in a few minutes, seated in Bertie's nursery, Bessie was showing, with a mother's delight, all the marvelous charms and perfections of that young gentleman. Helen responded with ready sympathy and admiration, and Bessie soon forgot her momentary feeling of disappointment. They sat there for a long time, at first playing with the baby. By and by he grew tired and laid his head on Helen's breast and went to sleep. She rocked him gently, twining one of his bright curls over her finger, and began to speak of herself.





68 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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"I soon grew very tired of simple sightseeing with Aunt Charlotte, and then after I became a Catholic, everything was changed. Of course, you do not know, Bessie, because you were so young, and were away in Japan, but my life was so wrecked, absolutely and perfectly, that I could not endure anything, not even to amuse myself, nor care for anything, nor anyone. That was the reason that I wanted to go away from home. I was afraid papa and mamma would see that I did not love them. It did no good, and in a little while I could not bear the sound of Aunt Charlotte's voice. When she tried to make plans for seeing the interesting things wherever we happened to be, I felt like putting my hands over my ears so that I should not hear what she said. I began to think that I was going insane, when we went to Milan. One evening I was coming home from a listless stroll, when my good angel led me into a little chapel where I saw a few people going to Vespers. There I first saw my dear Father Anselmo, and, what

was better, he saw me. I sat there, bitter and wretched, listening carelessly, when I heard him say: 'There is no sin more deadly than unrestrained unhappiness. It does not matter what the cause may be, unhappiness is almost always selfishness. We pray that His kingdom may come, and it is the duty of each one to help to bring the answer by being himself a happy unit in this happy kingdom.' Happy! I sat quite still after the others went out and in a few minutes Father Anselmo came down the aisle and said: 'Can I help you, my child?' I will not dwell on it, dear, but he was to me the Good Shepherd who led me safely to the fold, the wise physician who healed my sickness. I can never tell you what he did for me and I can never repay it," she added slowly.

"When my mind was restored to something like health I began to think what I could do with my life. I thought there must be something in me which, if it had enough work put on it, would be good for something. Do you remember, Bessie, the day

when Signor Bandini said to me, "If you were a poor girl your voice would probably give pleasure to more people than will ever know that you have lived?" I remembered it and gradually there formed in my mind a plan. Father Anselmo approved it and I at once entered the Conservatory in Milan. I worked at my voice and studied music besides, historically and scientifically. I put my whole life into it. I had many schemes and plans which, of course, were often changed in detail, but which were essentially the same: that is, to devote myself, all I have, and am, to brightening the lives of some of the very poor by means of music. Sometimes I have thought of a free school for poor children in connection with which there should be a beautiful chapel where I might sing with the children and where everything should be sacred to the poorest; then I have thought of other things, but"—and her smile grew as serene as a summer night—"that is the way in which I hope to help His kingdom to come, in some of the sad places in

the world. Now I am ready to begin my work, but as it will keep me very close after it is once commenced, I have come home for a little visit first."

She leaned over and kissed the baby's hand.

A tap at the door and dinner was announced. They dined gayly; Jack and Ned were both at their best; they had all been much about the world and seen life in many lands. There was no pause in their merry interesting conversation and no personal topics were touched upon.

At that time of the year the nights grow suddenly cold, and after dinner they gathered in the sitting room where a bright wood fire was burning in the lovely wide fireplace. The evening was well over and they were laughing merrily at an amusing account which Ned had given of Tony's attempt to catch a blue octopus that morning, when Jack suddenly remembered that he had heard Bessie say that Helen used to sing, With the ordinary commonplace tone in which, if we only knew it, we



72 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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all speak the "Open, Sesame," he said:

"Won't you sing something for us, if you are not too tired?"

Helen looked at him, smiled, and said:

"Yes, certainly; what shall I sing?" and, rising, went down to the piano at the other end of the room. The piano stood out from the wall and was so arranged that anyone sitting at it faced half round to the room. The lights were bright and strong as they needed to be for the evening studies.

Ned had just finished arranging a copy of Yseult in Tintagle, for the piano and violin, and had that very day brought it in, saying to Bessie that they would try it in the evening.

They all sat looking at Helen, all thinking only how wonderfully beautiful she was, Bessie wondering a little if Ned would like her singing. She stood by the piano turning over some music.

"What is this?" she asked, and Bessie's heart stood still when she saw that she had in her hand the

Yseult in Tintagle. "What is it?" she asked again, "I do not remember ever to have heard of it." Then, without waiting for any answer, "Ah, yes, it is a wave movement," and seating herself she began to run over the music on the piano. No one spoke or moved. Bessie was terrified. She knew the horror Ned had of having anyone see his music in its present condition, and felt with a shiver that it would be simple torture to him to hear it sung by an amateur. As yet she had formed no idea of Helen's singing except as she remembered it. One glance at Ned showed his face white and stern, but his eyes were bright with excitement. Helen read the music through, running over a passage here and there, then turning to the beginning, while they all sat almost breathless, with firm perfect touch she began the prelude. The sighing of the wind, the rhythmic wash of the waves on the shore uttered by the piano, under her hands, brought the stillness into the atmosphere which precedes a storm. Then softly, with infinite sadness her



74 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

---

low sweet contralto joined the wind and the waves chanting a pitiful farewell to her love. By and by when the passion changed from farewell to longing and wild desire, her voice rose and filled the room, dominating the wind and the waves which now thundered on the shore, while in agony and fierce despair she demanded that God should give back her lover to her arms:

"Let not my soul and his forever dwell  
Sundered: though doom keep always  
heaven and hell  
Irreconcilable, infinitely apart,  
Keep not in twain forever heart and heart  
That once, albeit not by thy law, were  
one;  
Let this be not thy will, that this be done.  
Let all else, all thou wilt of evil be,  
But no doom, none, dividing him and me."

When she began to sing, Ned slowly rose and moved like one enchanted down the room. He stood behind her, and when the storm was rising and the cry of the wind was like the wail of lost souls his violin took up the strain and joined in the prayer with its indescribable plead-

ing. When they reached the end, Helen rose and looked at Ned.

"You?" she said. "Is it you who have made this wonderful, fearful, glorious thing?"

"No," he said, looking with eyes of flame into hers, "it did not live until to-night."







## VII.

**B**ESSIE spent a rather restless night, troubled with vague misgiving, and one time made up her mind that she would ask Jack to tell Ned about Helen's marriage. The next morning, however, when she came into the breakfast room, they were already there and were talking in such a perfectly business-like way, each seeming so calm, so entirely self-possessed, that she forgot her anxiety. Indeed, they were nearly quarreling over a difference of opinion about the orchestration of a prelude which Ned had brought in to show to Helen, and which he had made the wind instruments too prominent to suit her.

While they were at breakfast, Jack said:

"I have a proposal to make to you all. But first, Bessie, I have decided that I must go down to San Gabriel again. I want to see Father Giuseppe, and most of all I want to write the next few chapters of my book in that atmosphere. So what do you say to a holiday? Suppose we take a week for vagabonding, and give ourselves up to the manifold delights of simply being alive in this lovely autumn weather."

They all waited to see what Bessie would say, and in truth she looked a little chagrined, because it was the first that she had heard of the trip to San Gabriel.

"Must you really go south again, Jack," she said, "and before we go up to the city?"

"I really must if I am to write to my own satisfaction," he answered.

"Well," said Bessie, "we will consider it settled then, and now what shall we do for the beginning of our gypsy week?"

"A week will be a short time in which to show Helen the special beauties of your Eden," Jack said,

Ned said: "I will  
take a look at the sea,  
whether the tide will set.  
The sea is like a man,  
whims must be consulted,  
and mountains are  
always to be depended  
will sail when we may."

He soon returned, saying  
the tide would not be right  
and Jack proposed that  
begin by a general survey  
whole, and take the special  
afterward. Bessie ordered  
luncheon in the city  
then, giving an alpenstock  
and taking one herself  
down to the beach through

Here she sat down and leaning back against the rocks looked out over the expanse of lovely blue water, over to the still blue Monterey hills, and to the horizon of the blue heaven above them. She gave a little sigh of content and said:

"It is like a monochrome, all blue, but so different and so alive. When I see anything like this I feel my kinship with the earth so strongly. I seem to myself to be sister to the ocean and the mountains and the sky."

"That is all very well," said Bessie, "and after last night I think very likely you are, but why do you sit down? Surely you are not tired."

"Tired," she repeated; "no, only blissful. But where else can we go? The sea and this wall seem to say thus far and no farther."

"Not at all," said Bessie, "we are going up the cliff. What do you suppose that I gave you the alpenstock for?"

Helen looked doubtfully at her, but Ned led the way, and the path



80 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

---

was really quite safe although it looked as if only fit for goats. Stopping every now and again to breathe, and to look at the ever widening view, they presently reached the top. They picked the wild flowers that grew along their path, sang snatches of song for very joy, as the birds do, and went along the edge of the cliff for a mile or so. Here a sudden inlet of the sea made their way turn at right angles to its former course. Following this they came, after a time, to another path which descended in a zigzag a wooded slope covered with a thicket of madrone trees, scrub oaks, and buckeyes, with, candor compels the acknowledgment, an alloy of an occasional poison oak. The shade was grateful after the hot sun, and they went merrily down to find themselves at the bottom in the cypress grove belonging to El Ermita, where Dan, who had seen them coming from a distance, awaited them with luncheon ready to serve. Their table was made of boards placed on the horizontal trunks of two of the trees. The steak was ready to be taken from



the coals not thirty feet from where they sat, while the odor from the coffee pot, which was swinging over the fire, would have served to tempt the gods on Olympus.

After luncheon Bessie ran lightly along the trunk of one of the trees and, seating herself in a forked branch, leaned her head back against the tree in luxuriant rest. Jack found a similar place near by for Helen. She looked up through the little openings in the dark green foliage into the depths of blue in the sky.

"How sweet and kind it all is," she said; "one never feels any doubt about the things of nature. They all give us back our love in overflowing measure."

Presently they began to discuss the wonderful trees and the how and why of their distorted shapes.

"They were probably trampled into their present forms when the grove was very young by some troop of wild animals, who only stayed for a little while, then left them to grow old without the power of straightening themselves up," said Ned.



82 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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"I hardly think that," said Jack; "if you look at that tree yonder, you will see that it has had some sudden force brought to bear on it that pressed it down, and then later an opposite force which twisted it around in the other direction. It seems to me that it was probably done by an enormous tidal wave, which swept suddenly in and then retired more slowly.

"You are both wrong," said Bessie. "The trees are enchanted Indians who are waiting until the hour of their fate shall sound, when they will resume their former shape and steal noiselessly out and take back their own again. I am sure that they will not hurt me, however, because I am very fond of them," she added, patting softly the rugged mossy old trunk.

Five days of the week had passed. They had sailed over to Cypress Point at Monterey and down to Santa Cruz; had explored the caves for miles along the beach. Helen had hung with delight over the still pools where the green and purple sea



anemones clung to the rocks, and more than once the white foam had rolled over her feet when too much absorbed she had ventured out "to see just one more." The two girls were burned as black as Indians, their hands and clothes were torn from climbing through the scraggy underbrush up and down the ravines, but their eyes were bright and their hearts were light and gay.

They were coming home from a sail which, having begun rather late in the day, had lasted into the beginning of the evening. They had seen the sun set from quite out at sea. It went slowly down into a bank of thin and delicate clouds which they scarcely noticed until it was lighted by his vivifying rays. First and most prominently there seemed to rise out of the sea before them the walls of a great castle. Flags of burning red and flaming violet streamed from its every turret and tower. Away to the south appeared a forest of tall, finely pointed trees, whose fruits shone like the translucent gems on those of Aladdin's en-





#### 84 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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chanted cave. On the other side of the castle were mountains reaching high and yet higher, down whose rugged but burnished sides poured a river of molten gold.

All above this beautiful country the sky faded from bright orange into pale green and up into the divine celestial blue. The sea was gold, warm and rich, and the long path of liquid light across it to the west seemed an avenue leading up to a land of fair delight.

They had been very gay, talking and singing, and were tired with the long sail. Now they sat silent, each absorbed in his own thoughts, awed by the wonder of the changing scene. Each moment the opal sea took some new color, the fair sky-land some new shape. In a moment the sun was gone, and while they were still feeling the pangs that a dying day always gives Bessie leaned forward and reached her arms out toward the west.

"Good-by, dear sun," she said, "good-by, dear happy day!"

Instantly the rosy streamers of

the afterglow flushed up to the zenith as if to answer her. It was so sweet, so full of hope and promise. Bessie laughed a low happy laugh and turned around. Ah! how changed the scene! The round pale moon was just coming over the mountains, the sea was gray and, where it caught the gleams from her white smile, the waves curled up with a mocking, treacherous laugh as if foretelling disaster and death. A cold wind sprang up and Bessie shivered.

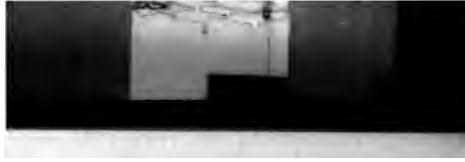
"O Jack," she said, "can we go in faster? I am in a hurry. I want to be at home."

She fixed her eyes anxiously on the little wharf which came into view and saw Dan waiting there.

"What is it?" she asked as they came up, while she pushed by the others to be the first on the wharf.

"It's de baby, mum," Dan said; "he do seem to be pow'ful bad, but I hopes as it aint nothin'."

Her flying feet were far up the beach before the words were out of his mouth. Yes, it was true. Herbert was very ill and it was soon ap-



86 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

---

parent that he had pneumonia. Ned left at once to bring a doctor from Santa Cruz and the others did all they could.

The next week was one of unmixed terror and pain. Then the worst was over, the doctor pronounced the disease conquered, and said that nothing was required but careful nursing. Bessie had not allowed anyone to take the child from her. She had had quite enough of leaving him and would now trust no one. Of course she had the help of the nurse and sometimes of black Julie, but she did not want Helen or Ned, or even Jack, around. She simply wanted service, someone to do instantly and exactly as she was told, so she preferred a servant.

Two weeks passed and Jack came in one day and sat down beside her. The baby slept quietly. Jack looked at the little fellow for a few moments and then said:

"Bessie, darling, I hate to leave you when you are so tired and worn out, but I am of no use here and the boy is all right again, so if you are

willing, I will go south now. If the weather holds fine I will come back here for a last week, but if the rains come you had better go up as soon as it will do to move Bert."

"I hate to have you go, Jack," she said, "but if it must be, the sooner you go, the sooner you will be back."

She felt a kind of fear and desolation come over her when he went away, but would not give up to it, and after a few days, the baby continuing to improve, she began to think about other things, and take an interest in what other people were doing.

When the child was first taken sick, Helen and Ned had both been constant in their offers of aid, but had understood when she said:

"Do not come to ask, I will send for you if there is anything that you can do."

They had gradually gone about other things and, perfectly naturally, they worked together on the Tristram and Yseult. Ned brought his work into the house and together they went



88 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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over and over it, now Helen singing, now Ned, and sometimes the piano and violin with both their voices making such music as had been hitherto unknown in the hidden little valley.

As often happens, the last week of October was warm and delightful, as if summer lingered to take a loving farewell. Bessie often left the nursery door open and asked them to play and sing for her all that they had finished. One especially warm day, wrapping Bertie in his soft afghan, she carried him down to the end of the porch near the sitting room door. She sat in an easy rocking chair and listened to the music, holding the baby in her arms. Ned had just finished the dying scene of Tristram and Yseult and this it was they sang for her. The music was so sad, so tender and passionate, the voices were so thrilling, each so beautiful, so wonderful when blended, Bessie's pride and joy in all so great that when it was finished and they came out on to the porch the tears were wet on her cheek.

Helen kissed them away. "Poor darling Bessie, how tired you are."

"How thankful and happy I am," she smiled.

Ned stooped over Bertie and taking the little wasted hand raised it softly to his lips.

"How thankful we all are," he said. Then taking up his hat he strolled off in the direction of the beach.

Helen went down to the arbor, only a few feet from where Bessie was sitting, and lay down in the hammock which swung under the red passion vines.

The bumble bees were droning; great lazy butterflies floated slowly about from flower to flower, and above the cliffs great flocks of wild geese were sailing toward the south. All the soothing influence of nature's ministers were around them, and presently, strongest and dearest of them, the gray plumed Angel of Sleep folded her wings about the sweet little mother, whose arms still kept faithful guard over the sleeping

90 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

---

child, and the beautiful woman who looked as she lay there in the yellow sunlight as if all beautiful things were made because of her and for her.





#### VIII.

**N**ED turned away from the house and, pulling his hat over his eyes, walked slowly along down toward the wharf. The sound and feeling of the last music they had sung was still with him. He walked on, going over and over the last strains, but conscious also of something else which strove within him, something which he had known quite well for days; which he had kept firmly back, determined that he would not let it have way and equally determined that he would not face it. To-day, however, it seemed likely to gain the mastery, so he fled.

He went out on to the wharf past the little boathouse, and sat down leaning his back against its side. The wide sea was spread before him,



but he did not see it nor any outward thing. His thoughts were far away, and one coming suddenly on him would scarcely have recognized him his face was so distorted with rage and bitterness.

"Curse it," he muttered with clenched teeth, "curse it!"

He sat there sullenly raging at fate, at his life, at everything, when suddenly the wind lifted a little fluttering thing and laid it at his feet. It was a piece of the veil which Helen had worn the last time that they had been sailing. He stooped and picked it up, his face softening instantly. Vision after vision passed before him. Days filled with her presence and nights of dear memories and glad waiting for the morning which should bring him to her again. He heard her voice, saw her eyes, frank and only kind, it is true, but so sweet, so dear, and dwelt on each charm of her glorious beauty as a miser gloats over his gold.

"Well," he exclaimed, half aloud, "every dog has his day, and I suppose this has been mine." Then he added

bitterly: "It is not much in a whole lifetime. I would live another life to have it over again," he went on, changing again, and seized with sudden fear at the thought that it must soon be over, that in a few days they would all go up to the city and be scattered, and that he was losing some part, perhaps the sweetest of this, his one day, he started up and walked hurriedly back.

Coming up to the house he first saw Bessie, with great dark rings under her eyes, fast asleep. He walked lightly, not to waken her, meaning to seek for Helen in the sitting room. Suddenly his feet were stayed as by a lightning stroke; he stood beside the hammock. At this moment moved by some invisible warning, Bessie opened her eyes, a vague feeling of impending evil oppressing her. The baby? No, he was sleeping healthfully. She raised her eyes without moving her head and looked toward the hammock. Helen lay there fast asleep also. One arm was raised under her head and the sleeve had fallen back revealing its

perfect beauty. Her long bright hair had uncoiled and rolled down, a shining mass, to the grass below her, and there, beside her, in the shade of the vine, stood Ned, his eyes fixed on her with a look of adoration, a look of such love and passion and pain that Bessie's soul sickened to see it. While she stared in speechless misery, he knelt quietly down and lifting one of the soft tresses pressed it to his lips. Helen moved a little and he raised his head, his eyes devouring her face. Slowly her great eyes opened, opened as one might say into his, which drew and compelled them by the power of his love, and opening so, hers smiled with tender, trusting love back into his as if she were in some happy dream.

Then came consciousness; she awoke and sat up. She looked at him and comprehended all. Suddenly her face grew hard and white. He started back as if stung, his own face now ghastly pale and with a look of horror growing in his eyes that seemed only to reflect the horror in hers. He sprang up with something be-

tween a cry and an oath and rushed from the place. Bessie saw his face as he turned away and the look on it broke her heart. She sat quite still unable to move. Helen gathered her hair up and slowly wound it around her head, then covering her face with her hands, moaned:

"Oh, God, oh, God!" Lifting herself up her eyes encountered Bessie's. Instantly her face grew fierce, flushed red with anger, then faded to gray. She rose and, moving slowly, like a woman made of stone, went up to where Bessie sat and bending over her said:

"You did not tell him; he does not know. I will never forgive you!"

The voice had no trace of Helen's, and before Bessie could speak a word she turned away, went slowly down the porch, entered her room, and shut the door.

Bessie sat quite still for a moment, stunned by the misery of it all. Her conscience answered to Helen's implied charge, and yet she felt something like anger rising. Why should Helen hold her responsible? Pres-



96 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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ently she got up and going into the house gave Bertie to the nurse, then hesitating for a moment, went to Helen's door and knocked softly. There was no answer. She knocked again, louder.

"Helen, will you let me come in? Please, dear Helen," she said pleadingly. There was a rustling sound as though someone moved slowly across the floor, then the same hoarse voice said:

"Go away.

Bessie stood waiting a moment. "O Jack," she moaned, "what shall I do, what shall I do?"

Then she remembered Ned's face as he turned away, and with sudden fright rushed to her room, seized her hat and ran down the path to the sea. Ned! He was the one who was wronged; he was the one who was suffering. How could she, who loved him so truly, who had been so happy thinking that she had been a comfort and a help to him, have let this blow fall on him? "No," she said to herself, "I have not let it fall, I have struck it myself;" and



so, hurrying more and more, she heaped reproaches on herself, feeling that she had known it all the time; yes, from the very first, when the words that would have prevented it were on her lips and she did not speak them, but aloud she only said: "O Jack, O Jack!"

It seemed so strange to her that she could be in such trouble and he not near to help her. When she reached the sand beyond the lagoon she paused for an instant, but unnecessarily, because she knew quite well where Ned had gone. The tide was coming in, but was still quite low, and there on the sand were the footprints of a man, who must have been almost running, leading toward l'Asile. She went swiftly on over the slippery stones covered with pulpy sea anemones, careless of what she crushed in her headlong haste, on through the scudding foam, around the first point and across the next beach. The point of rocks was already covered with water, and the tide was running in, but there on the sand was the print of Ned's foot



98 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

---

as if he had just gone over. Waiting until the wave that was coming in had broken, Bessie rushed into the water. She expected to get around before the next one came, but the water was deeper than she knew, and it is no easy thing to rush through water, so just before she reached the end of the rocks, she saw the great green monster, with its white teeth just showing along the top, curling up to spring upon her. Quick as thought she sprang upon the nearest rock, and scrambling along, managed to get out of its reach. When this wave had broken so that she could look out she saw that it was the first of a series of rollers which were coming in, as if the sea had suddenly marshaled its hosts against her. She climbed still higher and succeeded in reaching a spot where only the foam and spray dashed over her, and that she did not mind.

When the water grew quiet again she tried to venture down, but the rocks which she had crossed safely a few minutes before, when they were comparatively dry, were now simply



impassable. She crept slowly along on her hands and knees to the farther edge of the ledge of rocks from which she hoped to see the opening into the cave. It took some time, and when at last she leaned over and looked down there was another battalion of mad roaring waves rushing up to the mouth of the cave. Lying at full length and clasping a projecting stone with both arms, she drew herself to the very edge and shouted with all her strength, "Ned, O Ned!" At the same instant the first one of them threw itself into the cave, then burst out in a torrent of foam and water to meet the next oncoming wave.

They dashed themselves madly together and, turning, formed a counter wave or mountain. It rushed along at right angles to their former path, reared itself up and broke in fiendish mockery over her. It was only because she was lying so flat on the rocks, and that the stone which she held was firm, that she withstood the shock. She lay quite still, digging her feet into the rocks and cling-





ing with all her might while wave after wave broke over her.

Again the monstrous sea grew quiet and seemed to be taking breath for another attack. Bessie was so drenched, so beaten, that she could hardly lift her head; her hair was streaming over her face and blowing in her eyes, but, struggling, she raised herself and once more shrieked: "Ned! Ned!"

The wind caught her voice on her very lips and carried it off to the pitiless sky, and again she saw the long black swells rising and advancing upon her. "Jack, O Jack!" she sobbed, and crouched before them, fastening her arms around the friendly rocks. The something in human nature which makes the clutch of a drowning person last even after death, saved her then, for with the first of these waves consciousness left her and she knew no more.





## IX.

**I**T was about four o'clock when Bessie left the house and it must have been half an hour later when Helen came out of her room dressed in her traveling gown. She went directly to the dining room where Dan was busy preparing for dinner.

"Dan," she asked, "is there anyone about the place who can drive me to Santa Cruz to-night?"

Dan was the most discreet of servants, but he knew at once that something was wrong.

"Dere aint nobody 'cept dat Tony, Miss Helen," he answered, "and I 'spect he dun sail mo' boats den druv hosses."

"Very well," she said after thinking for a moment, "just have the

gray horse put into Mrs. Winthrop's phaeton and I will drive myself. I will send it back to-morrow. And Dan, I want it at once, you understand?"

Dan obeyed. He hoped that Bessie would come before the horse and phaeton were ready, but she did not. By five o'clock Helen had started for Santa Cruz by herself. Dan watched her drive away and the silence that settled down over the house seemed ominous to him, broken as it was only by Julie's high pathetic voice, out in the kitchen, singing:

"Keep 'itchin' along, keep 'itchin' along,  
Jesus 'll come bimeby."

Dinner time came and no one appeared. The hours at El Ermita were by no means very regular, and as both Mr. Harlow and Mrs. Winthrop were absent, Dan supposed that they had gone for an unusually long walk. He waited for an hour. Every few minutes old Julie's black face appeared at the door.

"What yo' s'pose I'se gwine do

wid dis yer dinner? White folks don' nebber seem to hab no re'liza-shuns 'bout cookin'," she said.

"Go 'long," said Dan, "don't bodder me."

He stood watching anxiously at the door. It was quite dark and there was no sound of anyone coming. At last Julie's despair over her spoiled dinner gave way to genuine alarm. For the twentieth time she came in.

"Go 'long, you Dan," she said, "you just get dat Tony an' go fin' Miss Bessy. What fo' you stan' dere starin' out de do'? You'se just good fo' nuthin'!"

She threw her gingham apron over her head and began to rock herself back and forth, wailing aloud. This roused Dan to frenzy.

"Yo' shet up, can't you?" he said. "Go an' fin' de lante'ns and shet up."

In a little while all except Bertie and his nurse were out searching in every possible place, the cypress grove, the rocks, and the beach. Tony took the lead and they went up and down the familiar places, calling

and whistling and swinging their lanterns. Then Tony got into his row boat and went out around the point to south, and then to north, but there was no sign. Dan and Patrick, the stable boy, had climbed over the cliff and down on to the next beach, the tide being too high to allow them to pass round. They were tired and discouraged and were about to turn back when Dan stepped on something which gave under his weight. He stooped down to look at it by the light of his lantern and with a loud cry held up Bessie's hat, the one he now remembered to have seen on her head when she passed in the afternoon going toward the beach.

The cry attracted Tony's attention. He was too far out to see what Dan had found, but up above where Dan stood, on the rocks, he saw something white fluttering in the wind, and he knew instantly that there they would find what they sought. He hurried in. The water was too deep and far too fierce for Dan to cross, but it was easy for Tony. Taking advantage of a moment's quiet he

dashed through the water, sprang upon the rocks, and in a moment was standing by Bessie's unconscious form. He stooped over and touched her. Yes, she was probably dead, he knew that, but fortunately he also knew what to do if there were hope of restoring life. Her clenched hands could not be loosened from the rock, but he moved her whole body forward and lifted them over it, then taking her slight form up carried her slowly and carefully around a little ledge and up a narrow path that, all unknown to her, had been close at hand.

When they reached the house with their apparently lifeless burden Tony proved to be a host in himself, and soon Julie and Janet, working under his direction, saw life returning. Then Tony left them and went out again to search for Mr. Harlow.

Toward morning Bessie opened her eyes; Julie was rubbing her feet, and after a moment she asked:

"Where is Mr. Harlow?"

"Tony dun go an' fin' him, Miss Bessie," Julie answered cheerfully.

"Bring me my clothes, Julie," said Bessie.

"No, 'deed, dat I neber can, Miss Bessie; yo' just 'scaped de jaws ob deff, now. What fo' yo' gwine temp' him ag'in?"

But Bessie only said peremptorily: "Dress me at once, Julie!" and was obeyed.

When the day dawned, which was almost as soon as she was dressed, she sent for Dan.

"Lift me up on to the long chair and you and Patrick carry me down to the beach," she said. When they reached the beach, she only pointed on toward l'Asile. The tide was low and they went on around the point up to the cave. Tony was there and shook his head as they came up.

"No," he said, "he is not there. I have been to the farthest end of the cave."

Bessie motioned to them to go in, and they carried her on to where the bank of dry sand had been. Alas! it was dry no longer, but bore the marks of the angry lashing of the sea.

They put the chair down and Bessie, sitting up, pointed to the spot where she had thought that there was light, and where there was now only heaped up wet sand. "Dig," she said, and leaning over watched with staring eyes and drawn face while the faithful creatures dug away the sand with their hands. Then she slid from the chair and crept over to see for herself. No, there was nothing there, nothing but a little cave whose wall was so white that it looked like light.

Tony now insisted that they should leave the cave because the tide was rising, so they took her up on the chair and carried her back. When they reached the house, Julie brought some coffee which Bessie drank. Then she got up and began to walk about, apparently forgetful of fatigue. She sent around to the neighboring ranches for men, and organizing them into bands bade some search the beaches and caves, some the groves and cliffs. She did not once think of Helen and no one told her that she was gone. She walked up and



down, between the porch and the lagoon, waiting in feverish anxiety for the different men to come in. It did not occur to her that Ned was dead, she thought of him as in deadly peril and was in haste to find him. As the day waned and one after another the men came back with the same report, "no sign, no sound," an ever tightening band seemed drawing around her heart. She sent some of them out again with lanterns to walk through the night. About midnight she fell asleep for a moment and was wakened by hearing Ned's voice calling her name. She got up and went out to listen. It was only the wind and the hateful, hateful sea, roaring and chuckling in fiendish glee.

Another day passed, and when night shut down again over the desolate house Bessie gave up. Ned was dead; he was drowned, and through her fault, because of her folly. Now she became possessed of one thought, to get to Jack, to tell him all. He would go to the city on his way from the south; she would see him sooner there, she must hurry, hurry.



Taking Bertie and the nurse, leaving Dan and Julie to pack and follow, and Tony to take care of everything until someone should tell him what to do, she fled; fled from the sea which she wished never to see again, from the cruel cliffs and all the horrible associations of the place.

Bessie never remembered the journey home. They arrived at Santa Cruz in time to catch the afternoon narrow gauge train. At Santa Cruz she telegraphed to her mother that she was coming, and to all outward seeming did as everyone else did, but everything passed before her as the pageant of a man's funeral would pass before his dead eyes.

When they reached the house, Mrs. Morris was there to welcome them. She was shocked by Bessie's altered appearance, and thinking it due to the baby's illness, exclaimed:

"Why, Bessie, my darling, how worn you are. Bertie's sickness has told on you more than it has on him."

She was busy taking the baby's

wraps off, talking and cooing to him with a grandmother's pride, and did not particularly notice the dazed look in Bessie's eyes. The fires were all lighted and dinner was ready, but Bessie sat down in her own room saying that she would not have dinner, only some tea. Mrs. Morris sat down by her and began to talk about Helen.

"We are so disappointed in Helen. She came home day before yesterday at noon and left on the overland that night. She would not give any reason for going, only said that it was imperative. For my part, I wish that she would stop this kind of life and behave like other people. Do you know what is the matter with her, Bessie?"

Bessie did not understand. She could not think, and shutting her hot eyes wearily, only said, "No." Her mother looked at her for a moment and said:

"My poor child, I have never seen you so tired and used up. You must go right to bed," and kissing her fondly she left the room.

When her mother was gone Bessie sat up; the steamer would be in some time the next day. She began to walk slowly up and down the room, then stood before the clock and tried to calculate how long it would be before Jack would come, but always it was *waves*, not hours, she counted. Then she sat down, still looking at the clock, saying slowly to herself, "I must think it all over so that I can tell him when he comes, or all these waves will wash it out. I want to tell him the whole thing concisely."

The clock took it up, "Cncisely, cncisely, cncisely."

She looked at it wearily, wondering who had taught it to speak. Just then it began to strike, and with the first stroke of the bell her mind took up its one thought again,—Ned, drowned and through her fault.

She got up, staggering like a very old woman, and slowly walked up and down again. So the night passed and the morning dawned of the day when Jack would come. When Janet came to ask if she would have breakfast she said, "Yes, here." Janet

brought it and, placing it on a table, left the room; Bessie did not notice it; but now a new phase of feeling had set in, that strange state of mind which is expressed by dual consciousness. Bessie, the calm, not unhappy Bessie, would tell Jack when he came all the trouble of that other Bessie who was ill and wretched and broken-hearted about Ned; Ned who was drowned by the huge green waves that kept curling up everywhere and were always threatening to overwhelm this unhappy one. This Bessie, crouching before the dead fire, did not dare to sleep, not for a moment, because if she relaxed for one instant her watchfulness the wave just there, over the mantel, that one, so dark, with the foam blowing back from its crest like a mermaid's hair, would sweep over her—and her head was so tired. But when Jack came he would know what to do.

The clock struck and roused her once more; surely it must be time for him to come. The blood mounted to her head. What if he should not come to-day? She started up in ter-

ror at the thought. There was a noise in the hall, the door opened. Was it Jack? She could not see, a mist swam before her. Was it Jack? She could not hear. The roaring of the ocean filled her ears. She stretched out her trembling arms, and no! It was not Jack, it was the wave that towered above her, and crashing down wrapped her in its cold green folds and bore her out—out—out—on to a limitless empty sea.





X.

**T**O return to El Ermita and the day when the storm broke which left it desolate. On leaving Helen, Ned rushed blindly along, not knowing or caring where he went, only desiring to get away. He did not intentionally take the path to l'Asile, but the tide being low, his feet automatically carried him to the accustomed spot. He went in and threw himself on to a pile of dry sand and gave himself up to the bitterness of his own thoughts. He had broken faith with himself, and the memory of the look in Helen's eyes, when she first wakened, was by far the bitterest drop in the cup which he had filled for himself. She loved him then; her life was brought into the fatal web of his own.

He cursed himself and fate. How long he had lain there he did not know, but suddenly, without warning, a cold wave lapped over him, wetting him to the skin. He roused himself and found the mouth of the cave a white waste of water, or rather a black night, except when, for a moment, the backward rush of water let him catch a gleam of moonlight on the white foam. Thinking only that they had been mistaken in supposing that the water did not reach that spot, he moved a little further back and sat down to wait for the tide to fall. The next series of waves, however, came higher, and for the first time the idea came to him that he was in danger. He looked around for some projection overhead on to which he might climb, but no, it was all as smooth as the vault of heaven.

For one moment he thought bitterly that this was a fit ending to the farce of his life, and prepared to meet his fate. At that moment, as though penetrating his soul rather than his ears, he felt Bessie call his name. With a rush it all came back to him,





116 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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the happy summer, the dear friends whom he well knew his untimely death would plunge into great sorrow. He looked around once more and, remembering the light which Bessie always insisted she saw in one part of the cave, although neither he nor Jack had ever been able to find it, he began to feel slowly around the walls in the direction which she had pointed out. It was perfectly dark and he was walking in water a foot deep, but after many attempts he thought that he felt a little current of air strike on his wet cheek. Pausing, he turned the other cheek. Yes, there could be no doubt, the air was entering the cave; the opening was very small but one side of it was sand.

He dug and pushed at it, hurrying as much as possible, and in a little while had made an opening into which he could creep and then placing his feet on the rock and bearing back with all his might he forced the sand, which was dry on the other side, back and found a passage large enough for him to crawl into. It



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 117

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was higher than the floor of the cave, and although entirely dark was surely open at the other end, because the air came freely down the shaft.

He had no sooner gotten into his place of refuge than, with a thundering crash, the water again filled the cave and banked the sand high against the opening. This opening was afterward found to be about three feet from the spot where Dan and Tony had dug.

Now he began to work his way slowly along an intolerable distance; it proved to be in reality about half a mile, and having to creep on his hands and knees, and sometimes wind through places so narrow that he feared momentarily to find that he could go no farther, it seemed to him many times as long.

At last he saw daylight gleam beyond; daylight indeed, but softened and subdued, and when he reached the opening and looked out, he found himself at the bottom of one of those sinks or wells which abound along the coast.

It is hard to say how these wells



118 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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are formed. They seem to be spots where the soil, softer and less firm than that which surrounds it, has entered into league with the sea in its insatiable efforts to devour the land. After a time, with the in-reaching of the sea from without and the sapping of the springs and rain from within, the barriers all disappear, leaving the inlets which honeycomb the coast.

Ned looked at the sun and judged that the day was well advanced, but could not tell the hour because his watch had stopped when the first wave went over him. He drew himself out and began to look for a place suitable for his climb to the top. The walls were sandy on every side but one, where there were rocks and some *débris* of soil that had come down from the surface, also some scrub oaks and underbrush growing here and there. It seemed that here was the place to make the attempt, and, although he was exhausted with the long creeping and all the exertions of the night, he began at once to climb. Catching now and then at



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 119

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the shrubs and drawing himself up by his hands from point to point, he had passed more than half of the almost perpendicular wall when he found himself on a little shelf from which there seemed to be no way either up or down. He stopped and looked carefully around. He was beginning to feel faint from his long fast and fatigue and was not quite sure of himself; still there was but one thing to do. At about six feet from where he stood was a scrub oak hanging down the cliff, and a little above it, about as far on the other side, a rock which seemed to offer a firm foothold, and from that place there was easy climbing to the top. Gathering all his strength he made the leap, caught the shrub, and swung himself forward toward the next resting place. The soil was very thin, the roots of the oak lay along the surface and had no hold on the ground; it gave and started at his first touch and did not swing true, so he missed the spot he was trying to reach. His weight came back heavily on to the oak, which loosened

and slid from the ground, going with him over and over to the bottom. He was stunned by the fall, and when he came to himself one leg was twisted under him and he soon found that it was broken; he was absolutely helpless.

Fortunately he had fallen on to a clump of wet grass where a tiny spring oozed from the ground, and lying there in pain of body and agony of mind he was able to moisten his lips with the water, which undoubtedly kept him alive.

The night came on; he dozed, awaking at intervals to gaze up at the pitiless stars that alone looked upon his misery, then slept again. The day dawned and wore slowly away, night came again; the slow hours passed, each taking in its flight a little strength, each bringing the now visible end a little nearer.

The morning on which Mrs. Winthrop left El Ermita Tony stayed about the house and rendered such assistance as he could until she was gone, then betook himself over the hills toward Eagle's Nest. He was

not looking for Mr. Harlow, he had no doubt that the sea had swept him away and that he was drowned, but that very idea drove him, for the time being, away from the coast. He climbed listlessly up and threw himself down under one of the scraggy trees. He was very much depressed. Like all of his countrymen, he took pleasure so gayly that sorrow and trouble came upon him with corresponding heaviness, and he was much attached to Mr. Harlow.

He lay there for a long time, looking up at the sky in a gloomy reverie, when, suddenly, black wings swept down toward him and roused him from his thoughts. He sat up and watched, indifferently at first, three or four great, ugly vultures circling slowly round and round the same spot, distant only about a quarter of a mile from where he lay. Every now and again they would swoop down, then suddenly rise and begin again circling round and round.

With a fierce cry Tony bounded to his feet and tore madly down to the spot. Reaching the top of the

sink, he crept to the edge and looked over to where Ned lay still and white, apparently dead.

Tony was a sailor and could climb like a cat; with sure but swift agility he let himself down and knelt beside the unconscious man; he felt his heart—yes, the faithful thing still beat on, though feebly. He bathed the pale face and lips with water, then poured a little whisky from his own flask into the nerveless mouth.

The question now was, could he leave Mr. Harlow there with those cruel monsters overhead, or could he carry him home himself. He determined to try the latter, and first, looking the wall over carefully, he lay down on the ground beside Mr. Harlow; he succeeded at length in getting the limp arms around his neck and slowly rose to his feet with Ned on his back. Now, carefully, slowly, he began to climb, not where Ned had made his ineffectual effort, but near to the sandy side where, if he now and then slipped back a little, there was no danger of his falling.

When at last he reached the top



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 123

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e sun was just sinking over the sea.  
s last rays lighted Ned's lifeless  
ce and clammy hair; shone on  
essie's unseeing eyes as, with de-  
air in her heart and fire in her  
ain, she sped on her way along the  
arshes of the San Francisco bay;  
d gave no slightest message of it  
l to Jack, lazily lounging on the  
ck of the steamer and marking its  
cline.







## XI.

**H**ACK had set off for the south with a light heart; it was entirely true, as he had said, that he wished to see Father Guiseppe again. The priest was an old friend of his, and, indeed, he was indebted to him for the chief facts on which the story which he was now writing turned. He had been "dwelling in Norway," as he called it, and now wished to go down to the scene of the second part of the tale to refresh, not his memory, but his impressions; to dwell there also.

A new element had, however, entered into the satisfaction with which he set off from El Ermita. He was distinctly bored. Certainly he was in his own house with his own occupations and recreations; he



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 125


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was fond of Ned and found Helen a charming and attractive woman—but "Ye gods," he said to himself, "can anything be more dreadful? Thank God, Bessie's music is only a pastime, not an absorbing occupation, morning, noon, and night!" It was with difficulty that he had been able to preserve toward his guests the unruffled politeness which he desired. He sincerely hoped that if ever Ned's opera were put upon the stage he would be miles from the scene. Then, too, he missed Bessie's constant companionship. He had not realized before that it was her bright sunny nature which had made El Ermita so joyous to him, that there was no music without her voice, no pleasure or comfort without her ready sympathy. Still, although he was lonely enough without her, he would not think of disputing the baby's more urgent claim. Therefore it was that, thankful that the plan had been already made, he said his adieu and went gayly down to the old Mission of San Gabriel. There he spent ten days walking

lazily up and down in the cloisters, lying in the shade of the old pepper tree that grew beside Father Giuseppe's porch, talking a little, but chiefly listening to the old man's recollections of fifty years before, and absorbing into himself the influences which he sought.

He worked too, for at night his story grew not only on the written paper but to himself. As he wrote of the warm-hearted, passionate people who had lived and loved and died here years ago, he seemed to himself to have lived with them, to belong to them and to their world. It was a world in which Faith was, instead of Knowledge; where the hand was guided by the quick throb of the heart, not by the cold reasoning of the brain.

When the time came which he had fixed for his return it was with difficulty that he could persuade himself to leave San Gabriel, and when at length he found himself on the steamer bound for San Francisco, it was with feelings akin to disgust that he recognized some of his own friends





who were returning from El Coronado, so little did he feel that he belonged to this rushing, tired, dissatisfied people. These men were members of his own club, with all the virtues of their time and kind. On the morning of the day when they were to arrive in San Francisco, they were all gathered out on the deck, idly smoking and chatting intermittently. Presently one of them, a rather brilliant young lawyer, began, with an air of infinite superiority and transcendentalism, to explain the wonderful reasoning which had finally led him to believe in nothing whatever, to have neither a God in heaven nor a soul within himself, and to look with languid pity upon the crowd not so clear-sighted as himself. His companion, a young man also, and editor of one of the San Francisco papers, engaged him in a sharp contest of words, not in regard to the conclusion of the argument, but as to the manner of reaching it. Jack lay stretched out on the deck smoking a cigar. He had been looking at the high hills of Eagle's Nest,



128 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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which were in sight from the steamer, and thinking of the home with its dear ones nestled close by the shore. It seemed to him that everything at El Ermita was in harmony with the true life of the country, and that there alone still existed the natural successors of those brave cavaliers and faithful priests whose short possession of the land has nevertheless left its ineffaceable spell upon it. The talk of his friends grated on his nerves. It seemed to him that they were masquerading, so foolish and useless seemed all their words.

He thought and almost said: "What do you know about it? What does it matter anyway? Go down to Father Guiseppe. Walk in the cloisters at sunset. Go in to Vespers, then sit under the pepper tree and watch the moon come up over the mountains. What can you know and what does it matter?" He said nothing, however, not wishing to rouse himself sufficiently to speak, but lay back against a coil of ropes and lived over the days when the Spanish cavalier was the comrade and

standard bearer of the Jesuit priest, and it was not the fashion to torture one's self with transcendental questions. In a vague sort of way he felt that he would have liked to have been either the priest or his companion.

When they reached the city, it was too late to catch the afternoon train for Santa Cruz; he therefore decided to go out and spend the night at his own house. He would not go to the club or anywhere to meet friend or foe. He was out of sympathy with all this hurrying civilization.

It was therefore with as much annoyance as interest that he saw, standing at his own door as he went up the steps, the ubiquitous telegraph boy. He took the telegram, signed the book, and let the boy go, then slowly tore the envelope open and read the contents:

"SANTA CRUZ,

October 31, 189-.

"*To John Winthrop, San Francisco.*

"Mr. Harlow found, is alive, leg broken, send doctor.

"ANTONIO GELITIO."



The American blood leaped in his veins, his languor disappeared on the instant, and his nerves were like steel, ready for any emergency. Janet opened the door to answer the ring of the boy.

"Janet? you here? Are you all at home? What is this about Mr. Harlow?" he asked.

"Oh, sir," Janet answered, "he is drowned. He went into the cave, and Mrs. Winthrop was washed up on to the rocks, and we couldn't find him, and Mrs. Winthrop and me and the baby came home."

"Where is Mrs. Winthrop?" said Jack, taking off his coat.

"She is in her room, sir, and she haven't eaten anything since we came home, and just walks up and down."

He made his way three steps at a time up the stairs and opened Bessie's door. Never was such a look of terror upon living face as he saw upon hers. When he spoke to her she staggered forward and fell before he could reach her. He lifted her up and, seeing that she was unconscious, rang the bell violently.



Oh, a thousand blessings on every thing that goes to make up the life that now is: the telephone, that calls for instant aid in time of need, and the wonderful power that science gives to the wise physician. In less than half an hour good old Dr. Markham, who had been Bessie's doctor all her life, was standing by her bedside, and Jack, waiting to do his bidding, was looking into his strong, steady face to read, if possible, the verdict there. Life or death, all that he had or was or hoped for, lay in the answer to the unspoken question. By and by the doctor gave some slight directions to Janet, and beckoning to Jack left the room. He only said:

"I am going for a nurse. Happily there is one in the city, a Mrs. Cary, who is the best nurse I ever knew. If we can get her we may consider ourselves very fortunate. I will be back in half an hour. You had better sit in the hall, outside the room, in case Janet needs you."

"But, doctor——" Jack began; but the doctor did not wait. He went out and shut the door.





132 "GO FORTH AND FIND."

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Jack went softly upstairs and, placing a chair at Bessie's door, sat down to wait. There was no sound except that of short, heavy breathing. Then there began a low muttering; he had never heard any human lips utter words so fast; they fell over each other in a rush that made them utterly unintelligible. He bent over, listening intently, his ears strained to catch one word that could be understood. Suddenly the blood froze at his heart as a piercing shriek rang through the room: "Ned, Ned, Ned!" He rushed into the chamber. Bessie was struggling with Janet, who vainly tried to keep her in the bed; he tried to take her in his arms, but she pushed him away. On this scene the doctor entered, followed by a quiet little woman with strong, calm eyes, who came up to the bed and, laying her soft cool hand on Bessie's burning head, said very gently:

"Lie down, dear child."

Looking wildly at the newcomer, Bessie obeyed.

Dr. Markham now gave his directions to Mrs. Cary, saying:





"Our hope is in you; you will have full charge here and I will send you an assistant from the hospital. Mr. Winthrop will see that the house is kept perfectly quiet," he added, turning to Jack.

Jack followed the doctor downstairs and drew him into the library. He only looked the question which he did not dare to speak. The doctor shook his head.

"God only knows, my poor boy," he said; "it is brain fever with strong typhoid symptoms, but we must do what we can. I am very thankful that we have Mrs. Cary; it gives me hope."

"Ned, Ned!" rang again the terrible cry.

It brought to Jack's mind the telegram, which he had forgotten. He took it from his pocket and said:

"We must do something about this. I do not understand it; I have only just come home, but there has been some terrible accident and I have not yet found out what it was. What shall we do?" he asked, handing the telegram to the doctor.

"I will send Grattan down," the doctor replied, "he is a young man, but he will do everything for your friend that can be done."

"Grattan," said Jack; "I do not know him."

"No," said the doctor, "but I do. He is an enthusiast in his profession and the best man you could possibly have."

The next morning's train took Dr. Grattan on his way to El Ermita, while the evening and the morning were the first of many that were to pass over Bessie's unconscious head, and Jack had learned the full meaning of this:

"Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
My life-blood seemed to sip."





## XII.

**D**R. GRATTAN found Ned very ill, as might be expected, and at first thought that there could be no hope of saving the broken leg. Ned, however, was determined to save it or go with it, so the doctor prepared to try every expedient and to stay by, himself, and be surgeon, physician, and nurse. He was ably seconded by faithful Tony, but his best aid came from Ned's own strong constitution and youth.

After about ten days, as all was going well with his patient, Dr. Grattan ran up to the city for a few days. He found Dr. Markham absorbed in his attendance on Bessie, whose fever, now rising to the highest point, now sinking so rapidly as almost to baffle all remedies, kept him con-

stantly on the alert. Dr. Markham wished very much that Grattan could remain with him to see the other patients and relieve him in other ways, so, after careful consultation, they determined to bring Ned up to the doctor's private hospital in San Francisco. Accordingly Dr. Grattan went down to El Ermita again. The leg was in plaster of paris, all the symptoms were favorable, and, when the doctor suggested that he should go up to the city, Ned was so unfeignedly anxious to go that he brought all the aid of his own will to assist the undertaking.

Tony rigged up a swinging bed or hammock with a mattress in it, which he hung low in the boat in such a manner as to make it as easy as possible for the patient, and also so that he would be well protected from wind and water. It took two or three days to complete the preparations, and just then there came, most opportunely, a spell of such weather as makes strangers, who happen on it, think that there is no winter in California. The air with

just a touch of cold in it was most delicious to Ned, as, lying on the same bamboo chair on which Bessie had gone to search for him, he was carried carefully down to the boat by Tony, Patrick, and Dan. They put him gently down into the swinging bed, and, everything being in readiness, Dr. Grattan stepped on board, seated himself beside his patient, and bade Tony hoist the sail.

A thousand thoughts were in Ned's mind as he felt the gentle rising of the boat and heard the water rushing past its sides. Almost six months had passed since he had come in this very boat to this happy home. Happy? Yes, it had been so, and he had shared in its happiness. But now? It seemed to him that the blight on his own life had fallen over it. All was gone. Bessie, poor Bessie! He knew from Dr. Grattan how faint was the hope of her recovery or for her reason if she lived. And it was for him, in searching for him, that it had all come! He thought of Jack, of what would become of him if Bessie should die,

and he turned his head away from the doctor's gaze with a groan and a curse. But Helen, he went on, where was she? What had become of her? No one mentioned her name. Dr. Grattan had evidently never heard of her, for he only answered that he did not know, in reply to Ned's questions.

The blood mounted to his brain while he thought, and looking up at the swelling sail he whispered, "Hurry, hurry!" One thought alone had power to make him wish to live or to be well; it was of Helen, to find her, to see her, to ask her— He did not finish the thought, but went over and over again with this, that he must see her.

The day after he arrived at the hospital, Jack went out to see him. When Dr. Grattan had told him that Jack would come, he determined, at least, to find out where Helen was; but he was so shocked by Jack's appearance that he had not the heart to question him. For the first time he realized what Bessie's illness was. Jack had that unmistakable look of

disheveledness which comes from hours undivided into day and night, unmarked by work and rest, hours simply devoured by anxiety and pain. He was pale and pre-occupied, and while he was certainly glad that Ned was there and better, it made no impression on him. He stayed for only a few moments; it was not possible for him to remain long out of hearing of Bessie's room; and, indeed, the only thing that gave him hope or courage was to be where he could see the steady light in Mrs. Cary's eyes, and hear the cheery sound of her voice.

Time passed on, and at last Jack saw in the watchful, anxious eyes of the doctor that the crisis had come. The fever sank, not with terrifying rapidity, but slowly, quietly, and the patient slept, a blessed, restful sleep.

When Bessie opened her eyes and looked around she saw that she was in her own pretty room. She had no desire for anything, no thought of anyone, but lay looking at a picture of a Bodenhause Madonna, which hung over her bed. She felt pleased



with it, but no smallest remembrance of her own baby crossed her mind. Presently a ray of sunlight came into the room and, falling on the crystal pendants of the chandelier, made a beautiful prism on the ceiling. She was happily gazing at it when a quiet, sweet face which she did not know looked into hers. She knew herself to be at home, so instinctively smiled a welcome to this gentle stranger. Mrs. Cary turned her head ever so little, nodded, and said in a low tone:

"Be very careful."

Then Jack bent down over her; she tried to lift her arms to put them around his neck but they seemed too heavy, so she just looked into his eyes. He looked so sad and worn, he looked so glad and thankful, all at once, that in an instant, with a rush, it came back, her eyes dilated.

"O Jack!" she said.

He saw the coming storm and taking both hands said:

"Don't, my love, my darling, please do not. You have been so ill, so very ill. Please be good. It is all

right, everything is all right, Ned, Helen, all. Please, my precious child, do not tremble so; you will make yourself ill again."

"Take this," said a calm, firm voice which Bessie recognized as one which she had heard and obeyed for a long time. She drank the contents of the tiny glass which was held to her lips and, with Jack still holding her hands, she slept again, to awaken by and by to full consciousness.

Little by little, through the long tiresome convalescence, in quiet, painless hours of the night, and in the dear talks with Jack, short at first, but growing longer, she picked up the threads of life which had so nearly slipped from her grasp forever.





### XIII.

**W**HEN Bessie was sufficiently convalescent, Mrs. Cary one day brought to her bed a pile of letters.

"Look them over," she said, "and tell me which ones I may read to you, the rest must wait until you are stronger."

The first one which Bessie took up was from Helen, and Mrs. Cary, seeing the eager look which came into her eyes, said:

"Is that one which I may read to you? There are several in that handwriting."

Bessie hesitated for a moment, then said:

"They are from my sister, and, if you please, dear Mrs. Cary, I will read them myself; at least, I will try."

Mrs. Cary looked over the letters, and, taking one, opened it and handed it to Bessie.

"This is the earliest one; you may see if you can read it," she said.

It was from New York and was only a line:

"I sail to-morrow and I cannot put the ocean between us without asking you to pardon my cruel words to you. If you knew how wretched I am, you would forgive me. "H."

Bessie laid it down and sighed. She had not thought much of Helen's wretchedness, but had supposed that, no matter how much she had felt the charm of Ned's presence and of all that was peculiarly delightful about him, the knowledge that she was a married woman would have kept her heart whole. Now she began to remember, first, the night when Helen came; her singing of Yseult's song, and the days and night that followed; scene after scene passed before her and she cried bitterly to herself: "Blind, foolish idiot that

I have been!" Still she knew, or felt that she knew, that Helen had not been conscious of her love for Ned until she awoke from the sleep in the hammock.

Bessie took up the next letter and read it with wet eyes. It was one long wail of despair. Helen had gone directly to her old home in Milan, having but one desire, to find Father Anselmo. When she arrived he was away; a strange priest was in the old familiar chapel where she had been wont to pour out her heart's sorrows and prayers. Now, thrown back again upon herself, she turned to Bessie. She wrote:

"I cannot think nor pray. I cannot work nor rest. One sound is forever in my ears, one face forever before my eyes. O God! can it be that this is what is called temptation, and that I have dared to despise those who have yielded to it? I kneel before the altar and press the sacred crucifix to my lips, and while my lips repeat the prayer for forgiveness of sin my wicked heart cries

with awful exultation, 'He loves me, he loves me.' Bessie, my more than sister, I am fallen, fallen so low that I know if I should see him I would rush to his arms. What shall I do? Where shall I go? Pray for me and pity me.

"HELEN."

The next letter was only a note saying that she had received a letter from Father Anselmo and was going up into Switzerland to see him. Then followed a month of silence and the fourth letter was written in a calmer mood. The wise father was leading his child gently and firmly along the thorny path which her own hands had planted. He had heard her story through to the end. He did not excuse her nor bid her be thankful that her sin had existed only in her own heart.

"Bring your sin and sorrow here," he said. "Lay them on the altar and they cannot harm you. If, in those weeks when you were preparing for yourself this shame and misery, you had remembered to lay

your pleasure here, it would have turned to innocent joy. You forgot it then; thank God for the pain which has brought you back. I will not chide you now, but we will see what is to be done. Your work is ready for you."

She wrote that, with his assistance, she had found a small house and had begun her school. She had ten pupils, boys and girls, selected from among the very poor, those who were absolutely unable to pay anything. Almost every day one or two new ones came into the class. She was teaching them to sing, and her plan was to watch attentively for any among them who should develop either beautiful voices, or especial talent, in any way, for music. These she intended to take into her own home and to educate them thoroughly as intelligent musicians.

Before writing the next letter Helen had received one from Jack telling her of Bessie's illness, and the rest were short, anxious notes until the last one, received that day, which had been written on

"GO FORTH AND FIND." 147

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receipt of a cablegram from Jack saying that the crisis was past. It was only to express her joy and thankfulness that Bessie's life was spared, and did not mention either her school or herself.







#### XIV..



URING the days of Bessie's slow recovery, Jack went every day to sit with Ned. They talked in general terms of the disastrous end of the summer; Jack told Ned that Helen had gone East and to Europe as soon as possible after leaving El Ermita, but, although he had gathered from Bessie's wandering talk as well as from Ned's eager inquiries much of the real truth, neither he nor Ned spoke of it in any way. One day while Jack was sitting in Ned's room Ned asked:

"How soon do you suppose that I can see Bessie?"

"She improves very slowly, and I do not know," Jack answered; "the doctor fears that it will be a shock to her to see you."

At that moment Dr. Grattan entered with Dr. Markham.

"How much longer is this cursed leg going to keep me tied up here, doctor?" asked Ned.

"That is always the way," said Dr. Markham; "here is a young man who ought to be thanking God that he has two legs, or for that matter that he is alive at all, instead of which he is cursing because of a few weeks' quiet."

When pressed for an answer, however, Dr. Grattan said that the time would be very short, and promised to send him some crutches the next day. After the doctors were gone, Jack asked:

"Why are you so impatient, Ned?"

"Because I am going away," he answered, flushing a little; "just as soon as I have seen Bessie."

"Going away?" said Jack, looking at him curiously; "where?"


"To Europe, to Milan," was the answer, while Ned looked doggedly, almost fiercely, at Jack.

Jack got up and began to walk restlessly about the room. He knew

very well what Ned meant, and equally well that it would be useless to talk to him or to try to dissuade him from any course which he had made up his mind to pursue. Still he must tell him. He wondered how it had happened that no one had told him at first, when it would have been the simplest thing in the world and would have prevented all this trouble.

Meanwhile Ned was bracing himself up in his own decision; he thought that Jack was going to speak of his own past, of the insurmountable barrier which they both knew was between Helen and himself. He told himself that it was only to see her that he was going, to see her and to explain; that he was in honor bound to do that; in short, he must and would. Besides, he was his own master and not obliged to account to Jack in any way.

They remained silent for some time, each busy with his own train of thought. Suddenly Jack paused in his walk, and drawing a chair to the side of Ned's couch laid his hand on his shoulder.



"I do not know if you know that Helen is married," he said; "her name is not Helen Morris; it is Mrs. José de Santa Yberri."

Ned struggled fiercely for a few moments to regain his composure, and when he had partially succeeded Jack told him briefly the story of Helen's short married life, adding that Mr. Morris had repeatedly tried to have her get a divorce from her worthless husband, but that, being a devout Catholic, she had steadfastly refused.

Jack left him then to try, during the long watches of the night, to accommodate himself to this new turn of the kaleidoscope. For the first time that it had come to him with any significance, he now recalled the look of horror which had grown in Helen's white face as he bent over her while she lay in the hammock. It was this, then. She had fled from him, she had put the ocean between them, and he knew her proud, imperious nature too well not to realize that it would probably be vain for him to cross the barrier which she herself

had placed between them. Mingling with these thoughts came the memory of his own position, and with the conviction that all was at an end forever, he gave himself up to utter despair. When Jack came the next day to look in on him, he found him sunk in all his old misanthropy.

The doctor and Mrs. Cary had both given Jack so much encouragement about Bessie that morning, that he felt like trying to share his happiness, if possible, and so he set himself to cheer Ned. Unfortunately there seemed to be no favorable topic to introduce for that end. If he suggested that Ned should go to work on his opera again, Helen was inextricably associated in every thought of that. If he asked him to join Bessie and himself in a trip to Florence it would bring Helen perilously near. For want of anything else to say he broke out:

"D—— it all, Ned, the whole of this trouble has come from not facing things as they really are. You ought to go over to Scotland and see that

little girl, and settle the thing once for all, one way or the other."

The idea was new to himself, but he felt rather pleased with it and with himself for thinking of it, so he went on:

"A man may have a sort of a right to throw away his own life, but to go masquerading around bringing trouble and misery——" He stopped suddenly and went to Ned, putting a hand on his shoulder as was his habit. "Don't suppose that I am blaming you, dear boy," he said, "any more than myself, because I might have told Bessie and we might have told you about Helen, but I do wish that you would think seriously of going over to Scotland. There might some good come of it. You might arrange something and you are a man now—it could do no harm. Face the music, it is the only way."

Ned's face had changed from horror and disgust to anger and simple refusal, but when Jack said, "Dear Ned, you must forgive me if I have said too much; you know that it has


nearly cost me all that makes life worth having," Ned caught his hand and wrung it.

"I know," he answered, and there was no more said at that time.





XV.

NE warm morning in early spring Mrs. Cary had put Bessie's lounging chair out on the balcony which opened from her window, and, warmly covered with a soft Japanese quilt, she lay dreamily looking out over the lovely bay, the ramparts of Alcatraz, the soft green slopes of Angel Island, where, although she could not see them, she knew that the golden *eschscholtzias* were beginning to weave a carpet of such splendor as the Queen of Sheba's foot had never pressed, and away to the hazy distance, where the hills of Sonoma County melt into the sky. She was thinking over the summer with its beauty and joy, lost in so much misery, and was asking herself the eternal "Why?" Jack came out



on to the balcony, and she went on thinking, but aloud, taking him into her thoughts.

"We were all very true, good, kindly people," she said; "we all wanted to be happy and to give happiness. I do not see what canker was at the heart of it all, to make everything go wrong. Do you, Jack?"

"Nothing goes wrong or right by accident," said Jack, "and I think that if you look at this summer closely, you will see where the trouble lay, easily enough."

"What was it, Jack?"

"Well," he said, smiling at her, "as near as I can come to it, your true, good, kindly people were neither more nor less than a lot of impostors, each playing a part in a comedy, which has been at bottom a tragedy too; each hiding his own secret under his gay mask, and," he sadly added, "each paying the penalty."

"Jack," said Bessie, sitting up instantly and looking at him severely, "what were you hiding from me, and what penalty have you paid?"

He held her thin face between his hands and kissed her fondly. "I answer your second question first, darling," he said, "I have paid such hours of pain and agony as I had no idea that mortal man could endure. I have sat by your bed hearing the mutterings of your fever, seeing you struggle in deadly fear, when, if I could have penetrated for one moment to your clouded brain, I could have eased your pain and rescued you from the demon who held you in his grasp, and who was dragging you away from me in my very sight, and I was unable to reach you, powerless to help you. Worst of all, sitting so, I have known all the time that I, my own self, had made all this possible. By love, you will never know what your illness has been to me."

he added, man-like, "that it has been worse for me than it has for you."

"Poor Jack," said Bessie, patting his hand, "you are worn out and must have a change. I cannot see how you had anything to do with making me ill, or what you could have done to prevent it."

"Yet," he said, "that is the truth. Through all your raving, now crying that the waves of the sea were breaking over you, now trying in a thousand ways to tell Ned that Helen was married, you showed that the idea which was killing you was that you thought Ned drowned and considered yourself responsible for his death. Was that it?"

Bessie nodded and Jack went on:

"Well, dearest, if I had told you in the first place, long ago before we were married, when I first came back from seeing Ned, the simple truth, you would have been sure that however sorry you might feel for it all, you were in no way responsible."

Bessie was sitting up, looking fixedly at Jack. Now she lay down,

and still looking at him said : " Tell me now."

Jack was afraid ; she looked so much as if a little wind would blow her away. He took her hand, and smoothing it softly, said :

" Ned is married. He was married then, before he wrote to me, at the time of our engagement."

A very serious look came into Bessie's eyes as she said :

" Go on ; tell me all about it."

Jack straightened her pillow, and, wrapping the cover closely around her, told with less of detail than the reader must have it, Ned's story.

When Jack left Ned to go on his journey through India and Japan, Ned had nothing in particular to do, and no special plans except to spend his days as pleasantly as he could until it should be time to join Jack in Boston. He had plenty of money, and did not wish to do anything to make more. He always said that he had no genius for anything in particular, unless it were for appreciating what other people did. It was a favorite idea of his that there is more need

in the world for intelligent appreciators than for artists or for any other workers, and he used to talk laughingly of forming a cult of that kind.

He went about studying and enjoying everything, but absolutely untrammelled by what is called duty. He stayed for some time in England with some cousins of his, and after a time, as they were starting for Scotland, he decided to go with them. They all wandered about very pleasantly, spending a week here and another there, Ned looking up all the old people for miles around and finding out all sorts of interesting legends and histories of the places, with which he delighted the rest of the party in the evenings. In one of these rambles he found a beautiful little hamlet lying on the side of a slope which descended to a loch as blue as the heavens above it. On the other side of the lake the highlands rose tier on tier, their snowy caps mirrored in the placid water below.

The air of unworldly peace and simplicity about the place charmed Ned, and carrying his researches

further he found that the whole community was composed of Scotch Presbyterians ; that they were probably the descendants of some little flock which, fleeing from persecution in the stormy days of the Restoration, had settled in this hidden spot. There was no hotel nor anything which answered to that purpose, it not being thought desirable by their minister, who was the authority on every subject, that strangers should bide with them. Ned no sooner found this difficulty in his way than he determined to spend some time there. He went to the minister's house, a large, rambling, but exceedingly comfortable old place, and representing himself as the *avant courier* of a family of English ladies, each one of whom stood in particular need of a short sojourn in this restful valley, he besought the Rev. Mr. Graham to think of someone who could take them in. Ned knew his business and had not studied all sorts of people without finding among them other specimens of the kind now be-

fore him. He set himself to charm the old man, and presently introducing the subject of a doctrinal dispute which was at that time making wild havoc in the peace and charity of the Presbyterian Church, he ventured to ask Mr. Graham's opinion. It was a chance of years. A new listener to a man full of words and longing to pour them out! When Mr. Graham was fairly launched upon the subject, Ned, with an appearance of great regret, rose and said that he was very sorry, but it was imperative that he should get back to his family, and, as it was a long walk to the place where they were staying, he must take his leave. It was too much; a taste had only whetted the appetite; a vision of other intelligent faces raised in reverent attention to his own arose before the old man and he hesitated no longer. He said that since it was so much for the good of the English ladies, he would receive them for one week at the Manse, that is, he quickly added, if he could afford to do so. Ned understood

the thrift of the nation and his offers of remuneration relieved Mr. Graham of his last scruple.

It took all of Ned's powers of description and cajolery to induce his cousins to go up to this new-found Eden, but he succeeded with all of the party except the father of the family. He sternly refused to stay under the roof with the "old Roundhead." When they were settled at the Manse and had admired the scene from the windows, and had walked down to the little lake, the young English girls demanded a wider reach for their excursions, and so it happened that Alice Graham, a quiet, retiring, plain little girl about seventeen years old, the daughter of the minister, was invited by them to show them the country round about. She became, in fact, their constant companion, and as their tramps often lasted all day, the girls became very well acquainted with her during the week of their stay.

At this time Ned fancied that he was very much in love with Jack's cousin, Mildred Boynton, in Boston,



and he did not notice this little Alice at all. Anyway she made no impression on him except, as he told Jack afterward, as a little, insignificant, colorless atom. The day on which his cousins and he were going south to rejoin the father the whole party went across the lake early in the morning, intending to climb the high hills on the other side and get a view of the next valley, where there was another and larger lake.

Ned was climbing, giving a hand now to one, now to another, when suddenly his cousin Edith saw a little cluster of harebells hanging high above her head. She tried to reach them, and failing, looked at Ned, who promptly sprang up the rocks and got them for her. The ascent was very simple but the descent more difficult, and he was in a hurry, knowing that their time was limited. He came rushing down, slipped, and sliding some distance brought up in a clump of broom, to find that his ankle was twisted and he was not able to walk. The party turned back and sent assistance to

him, but when at length he reached the house he was obliged to confess that he could not go on that day. The traveling carriage was at the door, and it was in no happy frame of mind that he bade his cousins good-by, promising to join them in two or three days at the furthest. However, another week had nearly gone by when he found himself able to walk with a home-made crutch under one arm. He had listened with what show of patience he could assume to the long diatribes of Mr. Graham, and his ears and nerves were tired ; so when he saw Alice sitting with one of her little brothers out under the shade of the trees, he was glad to join her. Naturally they spoke of his accident and, looking up to the heights across the lake, he said :

" I am very unwilling to go away without seeing the loch which lies over yonder."

Alice smiled shyly and told him that if he really wanted to see it he could go by the road, which wound around the hills, and which would

take him to the loch itself, but she added :

"The view is very fine from yonder on the hilltop."

Anything was better than another afternoon in the Manse with Mr. Graham, so Ned asked her if he could get a trap anywhere in which he could drive around to the lake. Alice replied that she was quite sure that he could have her father's chaise. He looked at his crutch for a moment, and she asked if she might go and see about it for him. He answered that he would be very grateful if she would be so good, and after a moment's hesitation he added :

"Don't you think that you could come with me? To show me the way, you know."

She answered with the perfect simplicity of a child who was in her own corner of the world, speaking to a stranger within her gates.

"Yes, I will go with you if you wish it."

After she had gone to order the pony, Ned was sorry that he had asked her to go ; at least, he always

thought that he had been, but whether he really had a premonition of coming disaster or whether the event shed its darkening influences over the memory of the day is difficult to know.

They started out and drove along a curving road which ascended slightly as it wound around, in and out through the lovely hills. At first Ned tried to amuse Alice by chatting with her in the desultory way in which he was accustomed to talk to other girls, but she responded only by monosyllables, and after a time he became satisfied that she was nothing but an ignorant, stupid girl, and so lapsed into silence and gave himself up to the enjoyment of the beautiful day and the varying scene, so much the more delightful to him that for a week he had been shut up in the house. By and by the road began to descend, and then, as they turned one last curve, the lake lay before them in all its beauty. There was only a landing here, a little wharf with a boathouse where there were a few boats for hire, and a boatman who

would, if desired, row one to the other side, where, Alice told him, there was quite a town. He did not hesitate, but selecting the best of the boats hired it for a little row (he had been stroke of the 'varsity crew at Harvard), and seating Alice in the stern and telling the man to put the pony up and that they would be back in an hour or so, he took the oars and pushed out on to the lake. As they started he asked Alice to sit on the next seat in order to trim the boat, and she obediently changed her place, simply turning around so that she sat with her back to him, facing the shore which they had left. She had ceased to be anything to him except something which he had brought out and must take back again, and he was absorbed in his own thoughts and sensations.

The lovely green hill before him and the bright sky over him, the exhilarating motion of the light boat on the water, all united to soothe his somewhat ruffled spirits, and presently, as he rowed, he began to sing ; some old college songs first, then two

or three little French songs, which he had recently heard in Paris. He felt quite happy and contented. Before starting he had taken a general survey of the lake. It lay through a sort of valley or glen between a high mountain and the hill which separated it from the one near Mr. Graham's house. In some places it was as narrow as a river, then broadened suddenly into quite a wide lake with two or three little low green islands in the midst of it. The sides of the mountain which rose abruptly on the further side were broken here and there by deep rifts, and the top was composed of several sharp, pointed peaks. Ned had decided that there would be just time to go down through the first narrow, out around one of the islands, and back before sunset. He took the directions and rowed out without other thought or consideration. They had gone about three-quarters of the way to the island when Ned, who for the moment had stopped singing, glanced up at the sky above him. The depth of the blue struck him as most wonderful ; they were so shut

before the vision of  
sky of wonderful b  
sea upon which he  
sailed for many ha  
months before. A  
ness came over him  
his friend, and he ha  
ect to hurry on and  
Jack, while he softly  
self Buchanan Reid'

" My soul to-day is fa  
Sailing the Vesuviar  
My winged boat, a t  
Swims round the pu

Suddenly, while h  
ward, there floated l  
these depths of blu  
... ..



come out from the midst of the troupe, waving their fleecy scarves about them as they danced. Then a host of flying clouds, and one passed over the sun. He turned and looked ; behind him down the mountain, through every ravine, a cloud army was rushing. It came on, trampling out the brightness and covering everything with its pall ; the shore disappeared while he sat resting on his oars ; the water was gray behind him ; he looked for the island ; it was only a darker spot on the thickening gloom. Without more ado, he turned and rowed for the place which they had left ; in less than five minutes that shore was also lost to view, and they were alone in a mist which shut them out from all the rest of the world, which weighed on their eyelids and oppressed their breath. They were wet to the skin, and Ned told Alice to wrap his coat around her ; he had taken it off when he began to row. Although he was drenched with the fog, he was not cold because he was rowing with all his might. He thought that he was



sure of the direction, and when he supposed himself to be near the landing, he drew in his oars and shouted. There was no answer ; he shouted again and again, but there was no reply. Then he began rowing up and down, stopping every few moments and calling. This went on until he was quite exhausted, and finally, after hours of baffled attempts to find their whereabouts, he had to own to himself that there was nothing to do but to wait for the fog to lift. There they were, and there they must stay, for he had no idea, even, of the direction in which either shore lay. He spoke as cheerfully as he could to Alice, but he thought that she was crying, although she made no complaint.

The short summer night passed, and with the first rays of the morning sun the clouds lifted themselves up and floated out to sea. Ned had no eye for their fleecy beauty ; he only wanted the shore and home with its material comforts of warmth and food. They found the pony tied under a shed where the boatmen

had left him, and, getting into the chaise, made their way home as fast as possible. Ned had no thought more serious than breakfast, but he remembered afterward a look of fear in Alice's pale, colorless face, and believed that she was still crying, because she turned her face from him.

"Well, here we are safe and sound," he said heartily to the minister, who was waiting for them at the door when they drove up. Mr. Graham did not speak, but opened the door and they went in. Ned advanced to the fire and Mr. Graham waved Alice out of the room.

"To your chamber, girl," he said.

She left the room, and Ned heard a smothered sob as the door closed behind her. Then Mr. Graham turned to him and said.

"Is this the way in which you repay me for having violated the usage of my people, that you have brought shame and dishonor into my family, and have made my name to be a by-word and a hissing among my neighbors?"

Ned stared at him and then laughed, and said :

"My dear Mr. Graham, there is no by-word or hissing about this business at all. It has only been an accident, and not a serious one either, and unless she has taken cold, which I think more than probable, your daughter has had no harm from it."

Not to draw the story out too long, there was no use in trying to reason with the old man. He was convinced that his daughter's good name was gone, that never a lad in the country would think of marrying her after a night spent out in a boat with a stranger, and between his reproaches and prayers and threatened curses, at last Ned's wrath rose to such a pitch that he lost all reason and foresight.

"You have ruined my daughter," Mr. Graham said, "and have pulled down my gray hairs to drag them in the dust before the heathen."

Finally, when he could stand it no longer, Ned said :

"Very well, Mr. Graham, I will marry your daughter, and at once,

because I leave immediately for the south."

Mr. Graham made no delay, and when Ned, sullen and full of wrath, came downstairs from packing his portmanteau, the simple preparations were made, and standing there in the parlor of the Manse, Ned Harlow and Alice Graham were married, the marriage being performed by the father. Ned did not look at Alice ; he knew that she was trembling and sobbing, but he only thought of her as one chief element in the awful nightmare from which he more than half hoped to wake. When the scant ceremony was finished, Ned took from his pocket-book a note for a hundred pounds, which he placed on the table beside Mr. Graham.

"For her expenses until you hear from me," he said.

Without a word or look for his bride he left the house.

He was maddened, and did not think of joining his cousins, but went as quickly as possible to Paris, feeling that there would be more chance to lose himself in the whirl and ex-

citement of that city than anywhere else. He never knew how he passed the next few weeks, but by and by he sat down to think the problem out. First he wrote Jack a long letter telling him what had happened and asking him to hurry on and help him out. Before this letter was mailed he received Jack's letter from San Francisco telling of his engagement to Bessie, and, cursing all women, he tore his own letter up. Then he consulted a lawyer, but received no encouragement from him. Finally he wrote to his lawyer in Boston, telling him a part of the story. He gave instructions that a certain sum of money should be sent to Alice quarterly, that if she died or wished for a divorce, he should be informed of it, and that otherwise she should not be mentioned to him. This done, he cut loose from all ties and restraints and floated idly down the stream.

When Jack had finished his curtailed account of Ned's story he paused and then said :

"Now, you know all about it, Bessie, except this : I have been try-

ing to persuade Ned to face this problem of his life in a new way, to go to Scotland, see Alice, and straighten things out. We have talked it over and over during his own sickness and yours, for which he considers himself responsible. It would be too much to say that he has decided to go, but I am sure he is very much inclined to."

Bessie lay quite still for several moments, then she said :

" Jack, dear, was there any particular reason for your not having told me ? "

He flushed a little, but answered :

" Yes, Bessie ; you know that I often think you are a little hard in your judgment of people, and I was afraid that you would think badly of Ned and would not like him. He and I are such old friends, and I did not want to prejudice you against him."

Bessie's lip quivered, but she said :

" It was just such a reason that kept me from telling him about Helen."

After a little while she asked :

"What do you think Ned could do if he went to Scotland, Jack?"

"I think," he answered, "he is fully convinced that he has made a great mistake in living as he has done, and that he ought to be prepared to make great sacrifices to bring things into a normal condition."

He spoke so solemnly and with an air of such immense superiority that Bessie laughed.

"I suppose," she said, "you mean that he should go over to this poor little Alice, and, if she has not cried herself to death, and will not give him a divorce, and he can bring himself to bear the sight of her, he might hold out his lordly hand to her and allow her to come to him. I do not think much of his chances," she added, laughing again; "she must be twenty-one now."

Jack looked troubled and dismayed, but Bessie said:

"Carry me in now and go away. I am tired."



## XVI.

“ Love, that what time his own hands guard  
his head,  
The whole world's wrath and strength  
shall not strike dead ;  
Love, that if once his own hands make his  
grave,  
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall  
not save.”

**I**T is not too much to say that Bessie was plunged into profound gloom by Jack's recital. True, she already knew that Helen was married, but she also knew that she loved Ned, and Bessie was young and had almost absolute faith in the final triumph of love. It would be hard to say how she had hoped that things would come out right ; probably unjust to intimate that she had prayed that they might receive word that José de Santa



Yberri was dead, but that she would have hailed such news as an evident interference of Providence there can be no doubt. Now there would be no use even in this, and no one could expect two people to die off in order that two others might be happy. Also, while she now felt all Helen's pain and sorrow, she could not help realizing the matter a little from the position of poor Alice Graham, dragged out and forced to marry a man who did not even look at her, and who, without once thinking of her, had left her to live out her whole life without happiness or hope. She felt something very like resentment toward Ned, and finally her poor little head summed it all up.

"All people are tiresome," she said, "they are all either wretched or making other people so."

She was wearily turning this way and that for comfort, and finding none, when the servant brought the mail. Among the letters was one bearing the Milan postmark ; it gave her quite a new pang to see it.

"Poor Helen, poor dear sister,"

she said and kissed the writing before she read it.

"MILAN, March 25, 189-.

"MY DARLING BESSIE :

"This afternoon I am going to the Convent of Notre Dame for a few weeks and will not be able to write soon again. Before I go I have a great deal to tell you, partly because I wish you to feel satisfied about me, and partly because I wish to atone for my injustice to you.

"Yesterday afternoon when I went to my room, after teaching the children, I was very weary. Not only weary, but the constant pain and longing in my heart had grown to be almost unendurable. I sat down to read my devotions for the evening, but the words meant nothing to me. My bodily eyes read them, but before the inward vision of my soul there passed scene after scene of my stay at El Ermita, and by and by I laid the book down and gave myself up to living it all over again. Every moment as I sat there, in that delicious dream, the memory grew

dearer and sweeter, and life here, the life that I had planned, seemed more repulsive and impossible. Then across it all came the memory of my marriage and all the trouble and degradation of that time. I felt bitter and angry that my whole life should be wasted because of the wickedness of another. It was wasted before, I thought, but now, when all that makes life glorious and beautiful is here, within my reach, held out to my longing arms, now it is not to be borne. So thinking and feeling, it flashed into my mind that there was a remedy, a cure for all. I shut my ears to the voices which called to me to forbear; my whole passionate, undisciplined heart called out for happiness, and I determined to take it. I went to my desk and wrote to papa, not telling him why, but simply saying that I wished to be free, that I could no longer endure being bound to a man who had wrecked my life, and asking him to take steps at once and get me a divorce. When I had sealed and addressed the letter, I found that the

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little boy who posts my letters had gone for the night, and remembering that the mail would not close until eleven o'clock the next morning, was satisfied.

"However, I considered that the divorce was just the same as an accomplished fact and gave myself up to planning my future. I decided that after I had posted my letter the next day, I would go up to a little village in the Bavarian Alps, where I have a dear friend ; there I could wait ; the place is lovely and I am always contented there, and then when I was free I would send for him ; I would simply say 'Come to me !' I thought of his coming, of how his eyes would look into mine, of the question they would ask which mine would answer with such joy. I felt his arms fold around me and it seemed to me that there was endless joy and happiness in store for me. I went to the window which looks toward the west. I opened it and stretched my arms out to him and said : 'Oh, my love, my love, wait just for a little while.' Then I went to bed, but not to sleep ;

my heart was too full of imaginations and dreams of the future. At last, however, toward morning, I fell into a doze. Presently I became conscious that someone stood in my room, close to the foot of the bed. I did not look up at first, but it was borne into my mind that I was in the presence of great sorrow. I opened my eyes and with an icy shiver saw the blue of her garment, the celestial blue that fell down about her feet and lay on the floor. Now I saw that Father Anselmo stood just behind her, and compelled by a power which I could not withstand, I raised my eyes slowly until they met hers. In an instant I had risen from my bed and fallen at her feet. All, all came back to me. This was she whose tender love and pity had led me through my sorrow planted path, through whose care and guidance I had been reconciled to my life. I remembered how my heart had been filled with gratitude to her as, kneeling at her shrine, there had come to me the idea of making my life good and useful, and blessed, by minister-

ing to the poor who are her especial care ; and how I had even been able to pardon José, yes, to pardon him and pray for him, and to hope that through her intercession and my constant prayers he might be brought away from his wicked life into the blessed kingdom.

" Now I had cast all this from me, for the sake of this new earthly love ; I had sacrificed all peace and usefulness here, and heaven hereafter. As I lay sobbing at her feet, I became conscious that Father Anselmo knelt and joined his supplications to mine. Would she take me back again ? Had I indeed lost all my part in the Blessed Mother's love ? No ! She stooped tenderly over me, I felt her blessing fall upon me, and heard her sweet whisper : ' Courage, dear child ; I have trod the thorny path before you ; I will go with you now ! '

" Was it a dream or a vision ? I do not know. I awoke to find myself alone, lying on the floor of my room, my face wet with tears. An unutterable sadness filled my heart. Suddenly I saw the letter which I had

written the night before lying on my desk ; I took it, and tearing it in pieces, burned it, and with a reaction of thankfulness that was almost joy I knelt and thanked the dear Lord who had saved me when I had almost destroyed myself.

"I do not know how it is, dear Bessie, but I am changed. I seem to myself to have died to that world of last night and to be born into another. Now I am going to the convent to spend a little time alone with my new life and my own thoughts. Pray for me and farewell.

"HELEN DE SANTA YBERRI."

Bessie laid the letter down and covered her face with her hands. She foresaw the inevitable result and, with her natural Protestant prejudices, could not endure that Helen, her bright, beautiful sister, fit as she was to adorn a court, should be lost and buried in a convent. Her heart grew cold as she pictured her in the stiff garb of a conventual life, going here and there at another's bidding, without hope or desire, without dear

home pleasures or pains. She saw her face grown still and white and expressionless as her life, and groaning aloud, she exclaimed :

"No, it must not be ; I will not have it so !"

Clasping her hands under her head she began to form a plan ; she would go over soon, very soon ; she would take Helen away with her, would surround her with loving care and gay pleasures, and so win her back to life. "Wait !" said a voice, and another picture presented itself to Bessie's mind. Suppose that Helen had carried out her original plan ; Bessie knew that her father would be only too glad to get a divorce for her from her worthless husband. Suppose she had gotten it and then had sent for Ned ; he would certainly have gone to her from the end of the earth. Suppose that he had gone, and Helen, waiting to throw herself into his arms, to find in his love the balm for all her sorrows and the delight of her life, had learned that there existed between them another barrier ; that at the very time when



he bent to kiss her hair an innocent girl, bound to him through no fault of hers, but rather through his own weakness and rashness (Bessie called it so now from this standpoint), was his lawful wedded wife, would she not in her wrath and shame have said "all men are liars"? Bessie knew full well that she would, and she recalled the stern, hard face which had bent over her when Helen had said, "I will never forgive you!"

Presently Bessie turned away from this view and now began to make excuses for Ned. She was quite sure that he had never intended to tell his love to Helen, but coming on her so unexpectedly, sleeping in the hammock, his heart had failed him just for a moment. She went on: What was he to this little Scotch girl? Might it not be possible if she (Bessie) should go to her, she might be persuaded to grant him a divorce? Helen and Ned seemed born for each other and they loved each other. It must be done some way. Across the pathway of her thoughts, forbidding

them to go further in this direction, rose Helen's scornful face. What ! she to love a man who was so weak, so wickedly weak toward herself that he had dared to make his love known to her when he could not offer it to her honorably ? No, a thousand times, no ! This could be no solution. At last Bessie fully realized that the deathblow of this love which looked so beautiful, but which was false at the core, had been already struck. "O Ned ! O Helen !" she said to herself, "you have yourselves made everything impossible," and she repeated softly :

" Love, that if once his own hands make his  
grave,  
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall  
not save."

She closed her eyes, from which the tears were falling. Again she seemed to see Helen, in her simple nun's dress, standing surrounded by a wonderful choir of children ; some were large and some small, but all turned their eyes in admiration and love toward Helen, and on her face

there shone the serene light of satisfied mother-love.

All about through the aisles of the church where they were, was gathered a throng of the poor, beggars in their rags, the sick, and lame, and blind knelt there. Then the sweet child voices, guided and sustained by Helen's, rose and rose and filled the arches with songs of praise, and hard faces grew soft, sad faces smiled, and over all came a look of the peace which passeth all understanding. "Gloria Patri," sang the voices, and Bessie slipped from her couch to her knees, and joining them, prayed :

"Dear Father, keep Helen's heart close to the little human children, and do not let me forget Thy heaven because earth is so dear."





XVII.

**I**N giving Bessie to understand that Ned would probably go to Scotland, Jack had been governed more by his own desire than by any statement made by Ned. It often happens that one sees quite clearly the course that ought to be pursued by a friend, and that in trying to convince him one becomes the dupe of one's own eloquence. The arguments appearing unanswerable, the thing seems to be settled. It was so with Jack now. He was so certain that he had struck upon the right thing for Ned to do that he felt almost as if it were accomplished, all troubles cleared up, and Ned in some way ready to live happy ever afterward. This was far from being the case. Ned was indeed

very unhappy that through him and his ill-fate, as he called it, all this trouble and pain had come to Bessie and Jack. It is not too much to say that he would have been glad to have undone, by any sacrifice or effort that was possible, all the mischief which had come to them through him. For this reason, and because he knew that any sign which he should give of his real feelings or intentions would only add to their trouble, he said nothing. He let Jack talk on to him about going to Scotland, and assented in a general way to his arguments. But never for one moment did he hesitate as to what he would do. Day after day he lay in a big easy-chair before the fire, his lame leg stretched comfortably out on a rest, seeming to listen, while Jack in endless new forms repeated his assurances that the only thing that gives a man any real satisfaction in this world is the sense of duty well done ; but what he really heard was a sweet passionate voice singing :

"Let all else, all thou wilt of evil be,  
But no doom, none, dividing him and me."

When Jack paused, expecting a reply, he nodded his head in assent and closed his eyes, while over his senses there came the hush of a summer afternoon, and the odor of the lavender, and the hum of the bees, mingled with the thrill that passed over him at the touch of her hair. To see her ! Just to see her, that was all. He must and would do that, and then, after that, life had no plan for him.

When he had been able to walk without a crutch for a day or two, he went down to Dr. Markham's office, and asked him if it could not be possible for him to see Mrs. Winthrop. He said that he was going away from California, possibly for a long time, and that naturally he was very unwilling to go without seeing her. Dr. Markham told him that he might go to see her, but warned him neither to stay long nor let any mention be made of matters which might agitate her.

"She is by no means out of the woods yet," he said.

So it happened that Ned went up,

one night after dinner, just to say good-by. Bessie lay on her couch, and Mrs. Cary sat on one side of it reading aloud to her. Ned and Jack came in together ; Ned looked rather pale and walked a little lame. He came up to the couch, sat down beside it, and taking Bessie's hand in both of his looked into her changed, wasted face. The moisture gathered in his eyes as sometimes it will in a strong man's, and his voice trembled as he said :

"Thank God !"

Bessie pressed his hand and smiled, saying :

"Yes, indeed, dear Ned, for you and for me. What was it Tiny Tim used to say—'God bless us all every one'?"

They only stayed for a few minutes. Ned told her he was going away for a little while, that she must make haste and get strong before he came back ; asked what he could bring her from Paris, and played with such cheerful fictions. Meanwhile he said to himself, no matter what happened, he would probably never see her dear



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 195

---

sweet face again, and she, divining more truly than Jack had what was in his mind, dreaded yet longed to tell him of Helen and her letter, but did not dare, feeling that if she spoke at all, she would break down utterly.

The next day he went away. Jack went with him across the bay to the Oakland Mole, and stood beside the car until it started, Ned standing on the platform, silent and self-repressed. When the bell rang and the train moved slowly out, Jack wrung his hand, saying :

"I wish you the best luck in the world."

Then he went home quite satisfied that all was going well.

Ned went into his section in the Pullman car and sat down. He drew his traveling cap over his eyes. It seemed to him that fetters had fallen from him ; that he had escaped from prison. All through the journey across the continent, across the ocean, on to Milan, he went as one in a dream. He did not speak except to give necessary orders and attend to necessary business. He



did not think, or at least not to complete his thoughts, and if he had been forced to define his plan to himself, he would have said that he had none except to go to Milan and to see Helen. Nevertheless, through the days and nights of that journey his soul rioted in a life made partly from the memory of every minutest part of that four weeks at El Ermita, and partly from vague but delicious anticipation. He telegraphed to his bankers to deposit for him a large sum of money with their correspondents in Milan, for what reason he did not tell himself.

When he arrived in Milan he waited quietly for some time. It was so much to feel that she was near, that his hurry ceased. He made inquiries and soon found her school, and also that she lived at the Convent of Nôtre Dame. Many times a day he walked about the convent and the little house where she taught the children. One day, when he had been in Milan for about a week, he found, as he came near to the house, that the windows were open. The

children were singing. He waited, and soon her voice, the same dear, lovely voice, came to his ears, singing with them. He trembled so that he could scarcely walk firmly, but he did not go in; not that day. Why? Because, although in an indefinite way he hoped much, in the same indefinite way he feared much, and the present, to be where she was, to say in the morning "To-day it may be," and at night, "Perhaps to-morrow," this was too precious to be lightly thrown away.

Two weeks passed in this way. One day he went down to the little house and waited until the ragged children came out of the door, and as the last one passed he stood on the threshold and Helen was before him. She started a little when she first saw him, then her eyes met his, frankly and kindly, but oh! with such depths of quiet in them. They did not kindle nor warm at the light in his, but, on the contrary, he grew cold and still while they stood looking at each other. Then she spoke. She made no pretense of not understanding

why he had come. She motioned to him to come in and seat himself, and standing near him said :

"I did not think to see you again. Not here. But perhaps it is better so, because there is something which I am very glad to say to you. It is terrible to me to realize that this has been harder for you than for me, because you did not know, and I have wanted to ask you to pardon me for all ; and then I want to tell you that the pain has passed from my life ; all except my sorrow for your unhappiness, and I want,"—she came nearer to him—"I want to ask you not to throw your life away ; but to live it, to go on with your work and do it grandly, and to tell you that always, always, I am praying for you."

Her voice grew soft with entreaty at the last words, and Ned reached out his arms.

"Helen, Helen !"

She drew back and said quickly :

"Dear friend, we have nothing to do with anything that might have been—only with what is ; is it not so ?



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 199

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I have my work and you have yours. It was kind of you to come to say good-by, and it is time for me to go."

She moved toward the door, but Ned stood between it and her.

"No, no!" he said; "you must hear me first."

Then he poured out his whole heart to her. He told her of the blight which had fallen on him, of all his wretched wandering life which had never known joy or happiness until he had found her. With the passion of one pleading for more than life, he implored her not to send him away in despair and hopelessness for the sake of an idea, and begged her to consider well if she had the right to sacrifice his body and soul, as well as her own love, to the baseless fabric of a conventional law. The quick blood had rushed to Helen's face and brow when she heard that Ned had a wife. For a moment there quivered around her mouth a look of anger and scorn; then it passed, leaving her a little paler. But before he had finished his anguished appeal the same quiet,

serene look that had greeted him when he entered the little room rested in her eyes and on her face. When he paused for breath she said :

" I have asked you to pardon me ; remember that I also pardon you."

She passed quickly by him and was gone. The next day the little house was closed, the school opened in the convent, and the following week Helen entered upon her novitiate.

When Ned learned this he cabled to Jack : "*Tout est fini. Adieu.*" Then he disappeared from their world.





#### XVIII.

**W**HEN Ned had gone, Jack thought life would resume its normal condition. In the first place he was very much pleased with himself; he had helped to straighten Ned's life and start him in the right direction, and this in itself was sufficient to give a tone of quiet content to his thoughts. He turned his attention to his own work and soon was as much absorbed in it as ever. He went each morning to have a little chat with Bessie, and, as she always greeted him gayly and talked with great interest of all that he was doing, he did not notice that her improvement had come to an end. The relief from the fear that she would die was so great, and he had grown so used to seeing her lie helplessly

on her couch, that he had not realized the true condition of the case, which was nevertheless giving the doctor and nurse great concern. The disease was conquered, life was saved, but the elasticity, the inward force which would bring her back to living relation with the people and things around her seemed to be lacking. Day after day she lay on her couch or sat in an easy-chair with tired, listless hands lying on her lap, and a dreary look in her great black eyes. Nothing seemed worth while.

One evening, about two weeks after Ned had gone, Jack sat in his library, pencil in hand, looking over his manuscript, changing a word now and then as he read. There came a soft rap at the door, and in response to his invitation Mrs. Cary entered. She came up to the table and said :

"Have you thought what you will do when I go away, Mr. Winthrop? My time is very short now, and I want very much to go down to Santa Barbara where my daughter is, before I go back to my work at home. Mrs. Winthrop does not get as strong



as I hoped and thought she would, and while I feel that I must go I hesitate to leave her."

Jack sat with his pencil suspended in the air, perfectly thunderstruck. It had not occurred to him that Mrs. Cary would have to go, and now as he stared at her, and thought of Bessie deprived of her care, he was more than troubled. He felt very helpless when he realized that all the responsibility of the care of his fragile little wife would soon rest on him.

"What do you think it would be the best to do, Mrs. Cary?" he asked.

"I talked to Dr. Markham about it this morning," she answered, "and he thinks that she must have a change. If you could arrange to take her East, I would leave her for a week or two, and then come back here, to take care of her on her journey. If we have some pleasant plan to propose to her, when I first tell her that I must go, I think she will rally, and then by the time that we arrive in New York, or wherever



you decide to go, she will probably be much better, and, of course, if she is not, we must then decide what to do next."

Jack thanked her, and said that he would think it over. After she had gone he opened the drawer of his writing table, and tumbled his manuscript into it. Evidently the time for quiet work had not yet come. He drew a letter from his pocket and re-read it. He had received it that morning and had not given the contents a moment's thought, but now it presented itself to his mind as of possible importance. It was from his cousin, Dick Boynton, in Boston, and was chiefly about his new yacht, *Lilith*, and the cruises that he was intending to take during the summer. It closed in this way: "I wish that you and Bessie would come over and go with me. What do you say? Will you come?"

Dr. Markham lived only a few doors from Jack's house, and he went in to talk the matter over with him. Afterward he went on to see Mr. and Mrs. Morris about it. The re-



sult was that the next morning he appeared in Bessie's room with a fully matured plan which he proceeded to lay before her. He saw with satisfaction that there seemed to be more light in her eyes and more ring in her voice after he had discussed the plan with her. He said that they would go to Boston, to his old home, where at present his sister was living. They would stay there as long as they enjoyed it, and, if Bessie wished to, they could go over to England with Dick in the yacht, or, if she preferred, they could go over on a steamer. They would spend the summer wandering about wherever they pleased, and then, when they were settled in Florence for the winter, Mrs. Morris would bring Bertie, who had been with her during Bessie's illness, over to them.

After he had talked for some time he put into her hand a note which Mr. Morris had given him for her the night before, and said :

"How do you like this new scheme, darling?"

"I like it very much, dear Jack,"

she said, and when she took from the envelope a check for five thousand dollars, she added :

"It will certainly be very wicked in me if I do not get strong, you are all so good to me."

Bessie had never been in Boston to stay for any length of time. When she was a little girl she had spent two weeks there sight-seeing, but Jack always spoke with utter scorn of the Boston which she knew, and looked forward with great anticipations of pleasure to showing her the Boston of his early life, the Boston which is made by the people of his own exclusive set. He was not disappointed. His old friends were very glad to welcome him back, and were very cordial to his little wife. Indeed, Bessie's gay, frank nature and sweet face won her hosts of friends at once, and she was so happy in the lovely old home where Jack had been born that she would have been quite contented to have stayed there all summer.

However, the absorbing topic of the family conversation was the new



yacht, the beautiful *Lilith*, with its long, slender body of white and gold, and high, pointed bows which bore the figure of Lilith, with mysterious gray-green eyes and long braids of golden hair. Dick could think of nothing but the voyage which he had planned, and it was evident that he had set his heart on having Jack and Bessie go with him. Bessie hoped that something would happen to keep them in Boston, but one day Dick took her out to the yacht and showed her the stateroom which he had had fitted up for her with a hanging bed and every possible comfort, so when the day came for the decision to be made there was nothing to do but to yield as gracefully as possible. The truth was that the sea was terrible to Bessie, and she told Jack that the old Roman had expressed her sentiments when he said, "Praise the sea and remain on the shore," but she conquered these feelings, and the fact that she could and did give a smiling consent to cross the wild Atlantic in the little pleasure boat was good evidence that her nerves were

well toned up and that she once more held the guiding reins.

The trip across was charming. The party consisted of Dick and his wife and her sister, Margaret Whitwell, a pretty girl with a gay light heart ; two of Dick's friends who had just graduated at the Law School in Cambridge, and who were intending to take a walking trip somewhere in England, and Jack and his wife. It was a very congenial crowd, with just enough variety to give life without destroying rest, and no one could have planned a pleasanter way to cross the ocean. When they arrived at Southampton they left the yacht and went up to London for a week or two. Here they found Mrs. Stanton, Helen's Aunt Charlotte, whom Bessie had always called Aunt, living in pleasant apartments. She immediately invited Bessie to stay with her, and, as she had for many years spent some months of each year in London, she was a most delightful as well as a very useful chaperon. Bessie was now quite well again and enjoyed to the fullest extent their



**"GO FORTH AND FIND." 209**

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rambles about the city, to its thousand familiar though hitherto unseen places of interest.

Dick was preparing the yacht for a run up around the Skelligs, and it was within a day or two of the time for sailing when Jack came in bringing with him a lady.

"Bessie," he said, "this is Mrs. Warburton, Ned's cousin Edith, of whom you have so often heard us speak. I met her just now, and as I told her that we were leaving very soon she came with me at once to see you."

Bessie was delighted to meet Mrs. Warburton, who was a lovely specimen of a really well-bred Englishwoman. Her frank cordiality won Bessie's heart, and when she urgently invited her to visit her in her home in Epping, Bessie was doubly glad to accept. She said to Jack :

"If you will not mind going without me on this cruise, it will be very much pleasanter for me to go down to the country for a little while, and then I can stay with Aunt Charlotte until you come back. You know

that I do not really enjoy being on the yacht."

A new idea had come into Bessie's mind. Her heart did not at any time forget the dear friends who had made so great a part of their life during the past summer, but she had not thought much about them lately. Now, this meeting with Ned's cousin brought back very vividly the old feelings, and she determined to find out all about Alice from Mrs. Warburton, and possibly to go to see her. The next day Mrs. Warburton came for her and took her, through the loveliest country which Bessie had ever seen, to her home near Epping Forest. Before starting she had easily obtained her Aunt Charlotte's consent to go up with her into Scotland for the latter part of Jack's absence, and so had accepted Mrs. Warburton's invitation for two weeks. Our story has nothing to do with the details of this visit, which was full of pleasure for Bessie. During her stay she had many talks with her hostess about Ned. She did not tell her about Helen, but only talked of

the pleasure they had had together at El Ermita. She told Mrs. Warburton how dear he was to Jack and to her, and so led her on to speak of the summer they had spent with him in Scotland, and of Alice.

"She was a shy little thing; Marion and I were really fond of her. We had even thought that some time we would ask her to London for a week. No, I do not think that it could have been her fault exactly, but it was just as bad for Ned as if it had been. We were very unhappy about it, and father said it served us all right for going among those canting Presbyterians, as he called them. Poor Ned! I do wish that I knew what has become of him."

"Have you any idea what has become of her?" Bessie asked.

"No, I have never thought anything about that," Mrs. Warburton answered; "I suppose that she lives there still with her father."

"Can you give me the exact address?" Bessie asked, and while she wrote it down on her tablets she said :



"If I come across her while I am in Scotland, I will let you know what she is like. Poor child, it seems very sad to me that she should have nothing to look forward to in life."

"Yes," said Mrs. Warburton thoughtfully; "it certainly is very sad, and if I could get away from home I think that I would go up with you and find her. I am sorry that the idea never occurred to me before."

"Well," said Bessie, smiling, "I will bring you back a report. You know she is your cousin. You might be very fond of her."

"That is possible," said Mrs. Warburton.

A month later Mrs. Stanton and Bessie were settled in quiet apartments in Edinburgh. Their windows looked out over the lovely country and away to the Pentland Hills. They had been up to Inverness, through Perth and Stirling, and now had come to Edinburgh to rest. Bessie had not had the courage to go up to Alice's home to see her. She did



"GO FORTH AND FIND." 213

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not feel sure of a welcome if she did go, and she did not wish to see Mr. Graham. After much thought she decided to write to her. First she tried to realize what kind of a person she was likely to be. Of one thing she felt certain—that Alice had loved Ned. She knew that the advent of this wonderful stranger into her uneventful life must have been like the coming of Lohengrin to Elsa, and that she must have loved him. She tried to bring the probable Alice before her mind, and to imagine what had been the effect of this long dreary silence following the strange, forced marriage. She thought that it had been to make her grow hard, perhaps bitter, that she was probably very conscientious, very prim and stiff. She determined that she would not be influenced by any of these things, but would do her best to like her, even to be fond of her. Ned was gone, no one knew where, but that was no reason for not trying to do what was possible for Alice; and indeed, the idea having come into Bessie's head, it was necessary for

her own peace of mind that she should try. She sat down and wrote a kind, frank letter ; told Alice that Ned was her husband's oldest and dearest friend, that he had spent the summer with them in California, that she had then heard for the first time the story of the sad, forced marriage, so hard for both of them ; that now being in Scotland for a few weeks, she wished very much to see her, and ended by asking Alice if she could suggest any way in which they might meet.

It was a warm day in August. Bessie had been for a long walk with her aunt in the morning, and she had thrown herself down on the bed and gone to sleep. The windows and the door, opening into Mrs. Stanton's room, stood open to let the soft delicious air stir through the rooms. Bessie's sleep was light, and presently there mingled with her dreams the sound of a low, sweet voice, so musical that it did not rouse her, but wove itself into her sleep. Suddenly she heard Mrs. Stanton say:

" Who shall I say called ? "



The sweet voice said, "Tell her Alice—Mrs. Harlow."

In an instant Bessie was off from the bed, standing in the open door, her eyes wide open. She had pictured Alice many times to herself, and in many forms, but never, never anything like this. A slight girlish figure in a gray cheviot gown, not too well-fitting, pale, gold-brown hair, which the wind had blown back from a fair forehead in which the blue veins were plainly traced. In her hands she held a large bunch of harebells, and a smaller bouquet of the same flowers was pinned to her dress. All these details impressed themselves upon Bessie, while she was looking into the most wonderful eyes that she had ever seen. It was not that they were so large, not that they were as blue as the waters of her own Scotch lakes, but that they were so full of *expectancy*. They seemed to say to Bessie, "You have come at last; oh! why have you been so long?"


The glad welcome in them, with its faint reproach, went straight to

Bessie's heart. She rushed forward and folded her arms around her, saying :

"O Alice ! I am so glad to see you."

There were no preliminaries to the friendship that sprang, full grown, into being between these two girls. Alice explained that she was living in Edinburgh with her aunt, and had come at once upon receiving Bessie's letter, which her father had forwarded to her.

Mrs. Stanton and Bessie stayed for two weeks longer in Edinburgh, seeing Alice constantly. Gradually Bessie learned the story of the years that had passed ; how, after the first prostration that followed her marriage and desertion, she had roused herself, and, remembering that she was Ned's wife, had determined that he should find her all he would like her to be when he should come for her. She had watched his cousins during the week of their stay at the Manse, and, seeing that he liked Edith best, had formed herself on all that she could remember of her. She





"GO FORTH AND FIND." 217

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always wore harebells when they were in bloom, because Edith had loved them and worn them. After Ned had been gone for about six months, she told her father that she wished to go to Edinburgh to study and to live with people who knew the outside world. At first her father refused, but she brought the firmness which she had inherited from him to bear, and told him that he had made her Ned's wife in spite of both of them, and that now she must and would fit herself for her place in life. She was right and finally prevailed. Her father arranged that she should live with her mother's sister in Edinburgh. Here she had been ever since, working, reading (Bessie was amazed to find how well she knew the American writers, and how she had studied everything pertaining to her husband's home), and *waiting*.

That was the strangest part of it ; she had waited for Ned to come back for her, with never one thought that he would not come, and as to Jacob, when he served for Laban's daughter, so also to her the time had not

seemed long because of the love she had for him. Now it was sweet to her to be with Bessie, because it seemed to bring her at once into Ned's world. She was never tired of asking shy questions which would lead Bessie to talk of the life at El Ermita, when Ned was with them, and while she listened the soft, sweet color came and went in her fair cheeks, and her eyes shone with such a happy light that Bessie had to turn her head away to hide the tears that gathered in her eyes, knowing what she knew. No smallest doubt, however, came to the faithful maiden heart of the waiting wife.





## XIX.

**S**UMMER and winter had passed away, and early in June the weird and mystic eyes of the green and gold *Lilith* were gazing out over the fair waters of the Bay of Naples, while the soft sea breezes played with the lovely Stars and Stripes that floated at her masthead. On board, besides the Boyntons and Winthrops, were Mrs. Morris and Bertie, Fred Morris (Bessie's brother), Mrs. Warburton, and Alice. Alice had spent several months of the winter with the Winthrops in Florence and had there met Edith again. They were all with one accord devoted to Alice, and it was quite as a matter of course that every man who came under her influence at once surrendered to her sway. Jack and Bessie often won-



dered why it was that old and young, grave and gay, all alike yielded her homage. They concluded that it was this: her own life was absolutely single; it had but one interest, her love for Ned, and this very love vivified her whole nature. She was devoted to all around her. She met each one who came into her life with glad helpful interest which was at the same time utterly without selfishness, because she looked upon herself as set apart and sacred. So it was that one and all coming into her sweet presence, and feeling upon himself the influence of this intense life, at first desired to possess it and make it his own; but each one soon learned that it was permitted to all to sit in the light, but to none to appropriate it.

Once during the winter a rumor of Ned had reached them. It came through his Boston banker, who had received a draft from Irkutsk. That was all. Jack wrote to him, sending the letter to a banker in Irkutsk, urging him to meet them and go back to America with them in the spring.

After wandering about for many months the letter was returned to Jack. Of course they did not tell Alice, but both Jack and Bessie lost all hope, and sometimes Bessie, when she saw her brother watching Alice with a wistful look in his eyes, would for a moment wish that she could be free and know that she was so. The next instant she would realize that Alice and her love were one and inseparable.

Alice had intended to go back to Edinburgh early in the spring, but when Bessie saw the clouds that gathered in her eyes at any mention of leaving them she would not hear of it, so now they were all together on the yacht cruising about wherever fancy took them on the lovely Mediterranean. For a week or two they had been in the Bay of Naples and at night had dropped their anchor near the American man-of-war, *New York*. The officers of the cruiser came, one or two at a time, to visit them, adding that cheerful variety and charm to their life which only naval officers know how to give. As

one after another of them, as soon as he went off duty, came over to the side of the great ship and out to the little American yacht, all on board knew that Alice, with her pale Northern beauty and mysterious charm, was the loadstone that attracted them.

One warm night, the moon being in its second quarter, they ran out toward Capri. Lieutenant Rainy was on board, and he and Fred Morris were vying with each other in entertaining the party. Gay songs, sung with the guitar and banjo, and merry stories carefully saved up for such occasions, followed each other. Alice was unusually quiet ; several times Bessie asked her if she were not well. She smiled and answered :

" Yes, quite well."

Then she leaned back and looked out over the sea with longing eyes. They had turned and were going back to Naples ; the moon had set, and the great stars shone with mysterious splendor. For a moment the sounds of laughter and singing had ceased, and a little felucca with its

red-brown slanting sails looking almost black against the night sky, passed them, outward bound. Leaning back against a coil of ropes lay a man with his face turned up to the sky, and both hands clasped under his head, singing :

"Addio, mia bella Napoli, addio, addio,  
La tua soave immagine chi mai, chi mai  
scordar potra."

Three hearts answered with sudden thrill the sound of that voice. Bessie turned toward Alice; her head had fallen back on to the cushions, her hands lay lifeless in her lap. She had fainted. Jack sprang to the railing and shouted: "Felucca ahoy! Ned, Ned!"

But the wind bore his voice away as it brought to them more and more faintly :

"Addio, care memorie del tempo, ah! che  
fuggi!"

"O Jack! what shall we do?  
what can we do?"

Bessie stood on the deck beside Jack, wringing her hands while the

tears rolled down her cheeks. "I simply cannot endure it, I cannot. You must find Ned some way."


"Yes, Bessie, I will find him. I will go ashore at once, and I do not doubt that I can find where he has been and probably where he is going. I will be quick on his heels. But, Bessie, what am I to say to him when I have found him? That is the question."

"I wish that he could see her without knowing who she is," said Bessie ; "but she would not consent. Just tell him to go back to America with us. We will find some way to arrange it if once we have him here."






XX.

 WEEK later Bessie received a letter from Jack dated at Rome, which ran as follows : " I spent last night with Ned. We had a long talk, which lasted until this morning. He has spent a year in Russia, has been up into Siberia, and has seen Tolstoi in his peasant home. He has grown very grave and earnest, and looks at life from a new standpoint. He considers that a man earns the right to live by making his life of use to his fellow-creatures, and in no other way. He is now on his way to America, and I infer that he intends to take a hand in the political work of our own country, which he seems to think in great need of strong workers. Of one thing I am quite sure : he is

heart whole. He spoke of Helen without a sign of any feeling except friendly interest in her work. Indeed, he seems only to wish to know if people are doing anything that is worth doing. He consented gladly to my proposition that he should cross with us, and will come with me to Naples in a day or two. I thought it only kind to wait for him, and I cannot tell you just when you may expect to see us, but it will be soon. He sends his love to you and is glad that he is going to see you. I have not yet spoken to him of Alice."

The more Jack talked to Ned, the more profound and radical seemed the change which had taken place in him. He was very cheerful, even gay, but it was evident that the point of view was changed. Instead of looking constantly at his own life and its disappointments he was now absorbingly interested in others, and the problem in his own mind was no longer : How shall I be happy, but where shall I lend a hand ? In one of his talks with Jack he expressed himself in this way :



"I have been where I have seen human beings stripped of that conventional covering which prevents all revelation of true life. I assure you I have been appalled to see and feel how all the great human heart is quivering with pain and anguish under wrongs which we do not think of. We are used to them, but all the same they are crushing generation after generation of our kindred men, and I do not mind telling you, Jack, that putting myself side by side with a Russian peasant, I have been very much ashamed of my life."

"Do you mean that you are a communist?" asked Jack.

"No, not exactly," said Ned; "but I have learned to look at myself from the standpoint of a communist, and with his eyes, and I confess that I cannot blame him when he sees no excuse for my life."

"What are you going to do about it, Ned?"

"I am going back to my own country, to the place where I was born, and I am going to give what I am and what I have to her. I tell



you, Jack, that I do not think any country needs the help of her own children much more than our own does just at present, and it seems to me that every true American ought to be on deck and ready. That is what I am going to do, and I do not fear but that I will find work, and plenty of it too. I hope so, because I must redeem the time that I have thrown away."

After this it was with a fair degree of courage, mingled with much hesitation, that, the night before they were to leave for Naples, Jack sat down opposite to Ned, and, leaning his elbows on the table and his head on his hand, looked seriously at him and said :

"Ned, I hate to be always interfering in your affairs, but before we go to Naples, there is something that I must tell you."

Then he told him that Alice was with them and gave him a brief account of their friendship for her. He ended with these words:

"She does not know that I have found you, nor, indeed, that I have

come to look for you, and she need never know. She expects to go with Mrs. Warburton to London for a little while, when we leave, and then back to her aunt in Edinburgh. So you see you are perfectly free to do as you think best. You have only to join us at Southampton instead of Naples, but," he added slowly, "Bessie and I both wish that you would come now."

Ned had not moved his eyes from Jack during the whole recital. Now he remained silent for some time and then said :

"I will go with you now, Jack."

The party on board the *Lilith* were just gathering in the pretty saloon for coffee in the morning, when they heard the sound of a boat alongside, and the tramp of men overhead ; Jack entered followed by Ned. Bessie had told Edith and they were both nervous. Indeed, everyone was more or less embarrassed in the useless and unnecessary way that outsiders are apt to be. Ned took no notice of the outstretched

hands and officious greetings of his friends, but stood in the doorway looking at Alice; the questioning in his face yielding to wonder, then to something almost like fear.

She was standing where the light shone on her pale gold hair; the dark blue yachting gown which she wore made her delicate beauty seem more flower-like than ever. The first moment that she saw him, her cheeks paled a little, then the color came slowly and sweetly back while she gazed straight into his with her own unfathomable eyes of blue.

Memory started back dismayed. What was this before him? Surely not Alice. Then suddenly a little movement of her head seemed to fix the identity. He did not speak or move, for beautiful and gentle as she looked there was something in the pose of her head and in her face which plainly bade him not to presume. She was indeed "fair as the moon, bright as the sun," but also "terrible as an army with banners."

Presently about her mouth there quivered the faint dawn of a smile;

she came forward and put her hand into his. He bowed low as he took it, saying :

"I hope that you are quite well."

The spell was broken. In a moment, over all the tragedy of the past and the future, over all the tears and heartaches that had been and were still to be, kind conventionality had thrown her veil, and everything moved on quietly as is fitting among well-bred people. Edith monopolized Ned, asking questions about his sojourn in Russia, and giving him news of the various members of their family. He became at once an accepted member of the party, joined in all their excursions, and made himself agreeable to each one in his old charming way. Of course Alice and he were constantly in each other's presence, but they were never alone together, never seemed to seek each other, and no one made any allusion to the relation between them.

One night they were all scattered in groups about the deck enjoying the cool evening breeze. Jack and

Ned were lying out toward the bows talking politics while they smoked. The water was wonderfully calm; the reflections were perfect. Above, in the starlit sky, stretched the huge form of Vesuvius, a faint line, more like bright smoke than flame, drifting slowly southward from its summit. Alice leaned over the rail and looked at the reflection in the blue water. There was a very sad, wistful look in her sweet eyes and about the corners of her sensitive mouth. Lieutenant Rainy had been trying to amuse her, but now for some time had been simply watching her, at first thinking only how exquisite and dear she was, then slowly beginning to appreciate that she was sad and troubled. When the silence had lasted long enough to attract her attention she turned toward him.

"How beautiful it is," she said. "There is something very wonderful about these nights; they seem so old to me, as if they were the same nights that had been here for ages."

"That is a curious idea," he an-

swered, "but does it not seem strange that of all the poets and painters who have seen them, not one has ever been able to put on paper or canvas any adequate idea of them. I do not think that anyone has ever described, really, a beautiful night or day, a sunset or dawn, do you?"

"Yes, I do; and one of your American poets, too."

"What is this?" he said, laughing; "an English girl talking of American poets! You know we do not expect you to know that there are any American poets. I am sure it is very good of you."

"Not in the least," she answered. "I think that there are many true poets in America, but this one, Sidney Lanier, everyone must love. Do you remember his 'Dawn'? Listen."

Then in a voice whose musical cadence was like a caress, she recited:

"The tide's at full: the marsh with flooded  
streams  
Glimmers, a limpid labyrinth of dreams.  
Each winding creek in grave entrancement  
lies

A rhapsody of morning stars. The skies  
Shine scant with one forked galaxy,—  
The marsh brags ten : looped on his breast  
they lie.

" Oh, what if a sound should be made !  
Oh, what if a bound should be laid  
To this bow-and-string tension of beauty  
and silence a-spring  
To the bend of beauty the bow, or the  
hold of silence the string !  
I fear me, I fear me yon dome of diapha-  
nous gleam  
Will break as a bubble o'er-blown in a  
dream,—  
Yon dome of too tenuous tissues of space  
and of night,  
Over-weighted with stars, over-freighted  
with light,  
Over-sated with beauty and silence, will  
seem  
But a bubble that broke in a dream,  
If a bound of degree to this grace he laid,  
Or a sound or a motion made.

" But, no ! it is made : list ! somewhere,—  
mystery, where ?  
In the leaves ? in the air ?  
In my heart ? is a motion made :  
'Tis a motion of dawn, like a flicker of  
light on shade.  
In the leaves 'tis palpable : low multitudi-  
nous stirring  
Upwinds through the woods ; the little  
ones, softly conferring,

Have settled my lord's to be looked for ; so  
they are still ;  
But the air and my heart and the earth are  
a-thrill,—  
And look where the wild duck sails round  
the bend of the river,—  
And look where a passionate shiver  
Expectant is bending the blades  
Of the marsh-grass in serial shimmers and  
shades,—  
And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast fleeting,  
Are beating  
The dark overhead as my heart beats,—and  
steady and free  
Is the ebb-tide flowing from marsh to sea  
(Run home little streams  
With your lapfuls of stars and dreams),—  
And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,  
For list, down the inshore curve of the creek  
How merrily flutters the sail,—  
And lo, in the East ! Will the East unveil ?  
The East is unveiled, the East hath confessed  
A flush ! 'tis dead ! 'tis alive ! 'tis dead ere  
the West  
Was aware of it ! nay, 'tis abiding, 'tis un-  
withdrawn !  
Have a care, sweet Heaven ! 'Tis dawn !"

When she began the recitation  
everyone stopped talking to listen,  
but Ned, raising himself on his  
elbow, seemed lost in thought. He  
remained in the same attitude long



after the thrilling passion of the last words had died on the air, then, with a deep sigh, rose and went away by himself.

During these days, Fred Morris and Lieutenant Rainy were always with Alice, striving to anticipate her every wish. She was always kind and gentle, and no words can describe the quiet dignity of her demeanor. Bessie could hardly restrain the impulse to take her in her arms and weep over her, but she knew that Alice could bear no sign of sympathy. And Ned? Who shall tell his thoughts as with grave, tender eyes he watched his wife? As he realized how infinitely sweet and altogether to be desired she was, and remembered the dreary months and years of her life which he owed to her, which he had robbed of hope and joy and youth. As each day and hour revealed more and more the singleness of her strong character, and showed him with what nobility and sweetness she had met the misfortune of their ill-starred marriage; as he contrasted the life

which she had led with his own wasted time, his heart and senses yielded more and more to the influence of her presence, but his reason told him that there could be little hope that he could win the love which he had so carelessly flung aside. So he watched her and lingered near her, but spoke no word.

The last days came and passed. The *Lilith* lifted its anchor for the last time from beside its warlike neighbor, and, watched by kindly eyes from the deck of the great man-of-war, sailed away from lovely "Napoli."

They were off Southampton, and on the morrow they would be homeward bound. A shore boat was to bring off the fresh fruits in the morning, and take Mrs. Warburton and Alice back. They had been on shore all day and were tired and silent; all felt the sorrow of the coming parting. Ned had scarcely spoken during the evening. He sat near Alice, watching her profile, as she looked out toward the red western sky. Fred was picking out a new coster

song on the guitar, sometimes humming and sometimes whistling the air ; Margaret Whitwell sat by trying to help him to recall the tune and the words. Presently he laid the guitar down and Edith said :

"Ned, will you sing something for me ? It is a long time since I have heard you sing."

He drew the guitar toward him, while a far-away look came into his eyes. He played softly, and sang in a low voice one of the French songs which he remembered to have sung so long ago, out on the blue lake in far away Scotland.

He could see the lace scarf which Alice wore across her breast stir with the throbbing of her heart. Then he played a brief prelude and began again. All that he desired, but dared not hope for, was in his voice :

" Could you but read, my love, this heart of  
mine  
You'd find a wondrous story written there,  
It is the tale my lips would frame to thee  
Did I but dare, did I but dare.  
The tale of one unto whose soul was borne  
An angel's whisper soft as summer wind,

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**"GO FORTH AND FIND." 239**

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There is a heart which Heaven has made  
for thee,  
Go forth and find, go forth and find.

• A tale of one who wandered over earth,  
By land and sea, by home and foreign  
shore,  
Until into your eyes he gazed and knew  
His search was o'er, his search was o'er.  
Give me, my love, the courage then to tell  
The whole of what I've told the smallest  
part,  
Let but your eyes, love, bid my tongue to  
say,  
What's in my heart, what's in my heart."

His eyes were fixed on her and  
when the last sound ceased, she  
turned and met his gaze with all her  
tender soul in her face. As the  
strong waves of the sea rush to the  
shore, so his love surged out to meet  
the sweet dear passion in her eyes,  
and he knew that the old heaven and  
earth had passed away, and that all  
things had become new.

**THE END.**

H. G. / *ans*











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